

Bonus grilling guide: 10 crowd-pleasing recipes you'll use all summer

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JULY 2007 NO. 86

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for twelve

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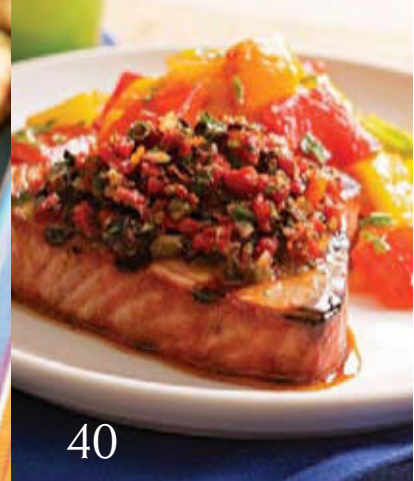
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JUNE/JULY 2007 ISSUE 86



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RECIPE FOLDOUT

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Mix and match main courses, starters, and sides to feed up to 12



ON THE COVER

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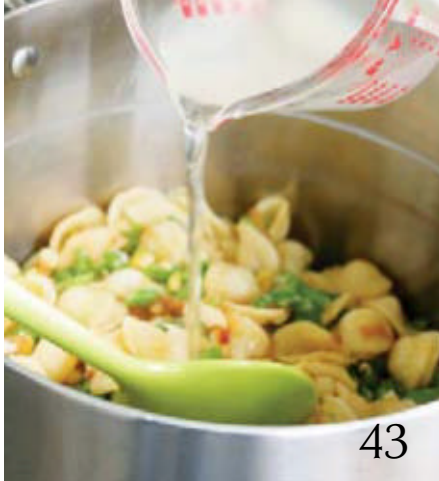


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RECIPE FOLDOUT



78a Quick & Delicious
Summer with a twist



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- ◆ QUICK
Under 45 minutes
- ◆ MAKE AHEAD
Can be completely prepared ahead but may need reheating and a garnish to serve
- ◆ MOSTLY MAKE AHEAD
Can be partially prepared ahead but will need a few finishing touches before serving
- ◆ VEGETARIAN
May contain eggs and dairy ingredients



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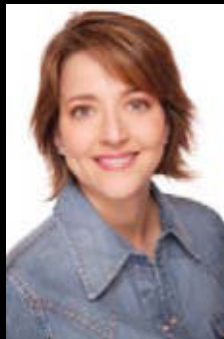


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Take It All Outside

If you're like us, once warmer weather hits, you're out the screen door, determined to spend as much time in the open air as the season allows. Squeezing the most out of longer days and sultry nights is infinitely easier thanks to the grill, which encourages outdoor cooking and eating. But easy doesn't have to mean boring. In this issue you'll find some uncomplicated ideas to help you break out of your barbecuing rut, whether by grilling some appetizers (p. 36) or making a vibrant topping for grilled fish (p. 40). And with the Fourth of July and other family gatherings coming up, take a look at our special pullout designed to make cooking for a crowd easier. Just be sure to check recipe yields: You may need to double or halve recipes, depending on your needs.

Alfresco Dinner Party

You can make the dessert, the salad dressing, and the cucumber sauce earlier in the day. Fire up the grill for the pizzettas appetizer and then grill the fish.

Tomato & Olive Pizzettas with Fennel Seeds and Aged Goat Cheese, p. 39

Grilled Halibut with Lemon, Dill & Cucumber Sauce, p. 42

Mixed Green Salad with Red-Wine & Dijon Vinaigrette, p. 47

Plum Cobbler with Almonds, Lemon Zest & Ginger, p. 61

To drink: A zesty, citrusy Sauvignon Blanc like the 2006 Babich, Marlborough, \$12

Summer Supper for Vegetable Lovers

You won't miss the meat in this satisfying meal, most of which can be made ahead.

Tomatillo Gazpacho, p. 78a

Grilled Portabella Sandwiches with Tomatoes, Mozzarella & Basil, p. 78a

Arugula & Fennel Salad with Orange & Fennel Dressing & Toasted Hazelnuts, p. 50

Triple Berry Cobbler with Pecans & Cinnamon, p. 61

To drink: A supple, fruity Pinot Noir that can be served slightly chilled, like the 2005 Meridian Pinot Noir, California, \$12

Quick Friday Night Dinner for Friends

The pork needs to marinate for only 10 minutes and then grills in less than 10. The rest of this dinner comes together quickly, too.

Grilled Asian Pork Tenderloin with Peanut Sauce, p. 78a

Mâche with Spicy Melon & Pink-Peppercorn Dressing, p. 51

Balsamic-Macerated Strawberries with Basil, back cover

To drink: A rich Shiraz blend like the Penfolds Bin 138 Grenache-Shiraz-Mourvèdre, Barossa Valley, \$19



Make-Ahead Picnic

All of these dishes pack well, and they can be made the day before.

Spicy Fried Chicken, p. 78a

Orzo & Grilled Vegetable Salad with Feta, Olives & Oregano, p. 78a

Lemon Cheesecake Squares, p. 53

To drink: A fruity Chenin Blanc like the 2005 Bogle Chenin Blanc, California, \$10



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from the editor

Inside Out

Last summer, we got into the habit of leaving the sliding door in our kitchen wide open all the time. It started out of laziness, as the slider is the preferred entrance and exit of our two large Labs, Gus and Scout, who always seem to be on the wrong side of it. Instead of ordering ourselves those cute doorman uniforms, we decided to give in and leave the door open. Our house sits high on a hill above a cove, so a nice breeze usually takes care of any flying critters that might wander in, at least before sunset.

This same door opens onto a small deck that connects to our terrace, or I should say, our summer living room. And we quickly discovered that leaving that door open was more than just convenient; it

brought about some good karma, creating a friendly flow of indoor-outdoor activity that lasted all season. Most evenings around 6, for example, my father-in-law would wander up from his house next door, walk inside, pour himself a drink, and then head back out to the terrace to sit under the shade of the umbrella. On Saturday mornings, our friend Neal would bicycle up the driveway, head inside to pour himself a cup of coffee, then join us (surrounded by newspapers) in an Adirondack chair. And when the summer invasion of cousins arrived, the shell-collectors could patter in, hands full, and wash off their treasures in the kitchen sink.

On nights when we were grilling for 20, I could tote my supplies and ingredients

in and out much more easily through that open door. More often than not we ate dinner outside, too, with folks vying for a spot on the terrace wall, sitting on a stone step, moving a plant aside to grab a stool, or just standing up, eating in shorts and flip-flops.

For us, keeping a door open helped enhance that relaxed feeling you get from cooking, eating, and living outdoors. I'm sure you have your own "open door," whether it's a special place, like a camp or a beach cottage that you visit every year, or a deck or screened porch you've added on or always loved. Maybe it's a ritual, like a regular Friday night front-porch gathering with your neighbors or even a little time spent every evening on the roof of your apartment building, as one of our Brooklyn-dwelling editors does.

Whatever you do, we hope that this issue of *Fine Cooking* will help you enjoy doing it. Since we know you love to cook, we've dedicated nearly this entire issue to outdoor cooking and living. We're especially excited about our "Grilling for a Crowd" pullout on p. 26a. All of the recipes serve 10 to 12 people, so all you need to do is pick and choose among them and you've got the makings for your next cookout. We also have a close-up look at a cook's outdoor dream kitchen (p. 54)—in Vermont, not California. And, of course, a lot of outdoor-friendly recipes, from grilled appetizers (p. 36), to fried chicken for a picnic (p. 78a).

Enjoy the summer, and don't forget to leave the door open once in a while.

—Susie Middleton, editor

Instead of ordering ourselves those cute doorman uniforms, we decided to give in and leave the door open for Gus and Scout, who always seem to be on the wrong side of it.



U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish lettuce tacos with tomato salad.
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FOOD NETWORK CHEF *Cat Cora*



from our readers

So simple, even an adult can do it

We loved the article on crème brûlée in the February/March 2007 issue (*Fine Cooking* #84). My 10-year-old daughter watched a popular movie where one of the basketball players “confessed” that he makes it. So we set her and a friend loose. We wound up doubling the recipe, which took 12 eggs (counting the four that fell on the floor).

You’re probably wondering if I really set my daughter free with a blow torch. Well, instead we used our broiler and kept the ramekins in for four minutes. The results were fantastic. Love your magazine.

—Samuel J. Tobin, via email

For people who cook, whether they like it or not

I have to laugh when I read the tagline under your *Fine Cooking* logo: For People Who Love to Cook. I *hate* cooking. I am a terrible cook. However, I love your magazine because you make me look good. I learn and understand the “hows” and “whys” of cooking from you. I hate wasting my time and money on other magazines, cookbooks, and food just to have a recipe turn out badly. I know, with complete confidence, that I can trust any recipe in your magazine to be excellent. Thanks!

—Julie Bickler, via email

Love those lamb shanks

Good as is, better doubled

Molly Stevens’s recipe for Braised Lamb Shanks with Garlic & Vermouth (*Fine Cooking* #84) was phenomenal. Following the suggestion of braising a day or two ahead of serving them, I prepared three lamb shanks using the amount of sauce in the recipe and decided that while it was adequate, the next time I will at least double the amount of sauce. Garlic- and chive-mashed red-skinned potatoes and tender asparagus accompanied the lamb, for a meal I would be proud to serve to anyone.

—Robert C. Oster, Hastings, Michigan

He agreed that the bok choy is “companyable”—a classification I put in my recipe database. One thing on that recipe: It calls for kosher salt, but since it also calls for adding soy sauce, rice wine, and prosciutto, I couldn’t imagine also adding salt. I’m really glad I didn’t. It was superb, and the kosher salt would have sent it over the edge.

Also, for your recipes that call for honey, try using maple syrup. It’s a wonderful substitute and keeps better than honey, which always seems to crystallize before I can use it up.

—Meg Wilson, Austin, Texas ♦

Humming a little bistro tune

I got your February/March 2007 (*Fine Cooking* #84) issue in the middle of a cooking mania. I had just gotten a new Le Creuset 5.5-quart Dutch oven, and I dove into the bistro recipes (viewing them as British classics more than French ones) and the bok choy recipe (Braised Bok Choy with Sherry & Prosciutto). My poor husband had been working extra-long hours, but he got to come home to these dishes, and he is still humming over the lamb shanks.

Here's the place to share your thoughts on our recent articles or on your food and cooking philosophies. Send your comments to Letters, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by email to fc@taunton.com.

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Allison Ehri ("Grilled Appetizers," p. 36), *Fine Cooking's* test kitchen associate and food stylist, admits that every time she grills up a round of her tasty appetizers she has to reserve a secret stash for herself. They're so good, her guests grab every single morsel, leaving her empty handed. A graduate of the French Culinary Institute in New York City, Allison worked as a freelance recipe tester, developer, and writer for several national food magazines before joining the staff of *Fine Cooking*.

Maria Helm Sinskey ("Grilled Fish Toppings," p. 40) is the culinary director and executive chef at Robert Sinskey Vineyards and the author of *The Vineyard Kitchen: Menus Inspired by the Seasons*. Maria is currently studying for a masters of wine degree and is at work on her second cookbook, which will focus on wines from around the world. She lives in Napa, California, with her husband and two daughters.



Maria Helm Sinskey

Before opening the award-winning L'Impero in New York City in 2002, chef **Scott Conant** ("Quick Summer Pastas," p. 43) spent years learning the ins and outs of regional Italian cooking, both in Italy and in some of New York's finest Italian restaurants. After L'Impero, he went on to open Alto restaurant in 2005. Scott is also the author of two cookbooks: *Scott Conant's New Italian Cooking* and *Bold Italian*, due out this fall.



Scott Conant

Annie Wayte ("Green Salads," p. 46) began her culinary career in London, eventually becoming the chef at fashion designer Nicole Farhi's restaurant, Nicole's. The restaurant was replicated in 1999 in New York and housed in Farhi's flagship store. In 2002,



Annie Wayte

Annie opened Farhi's third dining venture, the Notting Hill Café 202, which she brought to New York in 2005 as simply 202. Annie's cooking style, which blends English, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern cuisines, emphasizes seasonality and high-quality ingredients. Her first cookbook, *Keep It Seasonal: Soups, Salads, and Sandwiches*, was published last year.

Cooking instructor and freelance writer **Meg Suzuki** had no trouble finding tasters for her Lemon Cheesecake Squares (p. 52). When she's not in the kitchen, you'll find her playing traditional Japanese drums with San Jose Taiko, and her hungry colleagues are always looking for snacks. Before heading out west, Meg was assistant test kitchen director for *Cook's Illustrated* magazine.

Barbara Lauterbach ("Chinese Chicken Salad," p. 58) could write the book on chicken salad. In fact she has. In *Chicken Salad: 50 Favorite Recipes*, Barbara collected versions of the luncheon standby from family and friends and added her own innovative takes. She attended cooking schools in London, Paris, Florence, and Bologna, and now teaches at King Arthur Flour Baking Education Center in Norwich, Vermont, and at La Combe, in southwest France.

Abigail Johnson Dodge ("Fruit Cobbler," p. 60) was the founding director of *Fine Cooking's* test kitchen. She is now a contributing editor and the author of several cookbooks, including *Great Fruit Desserts* and, most recently, *The Weekend Baker*. When not writing and developing recipes, Abby travels and teaches cooking classes nationwide. ♦



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What's New at FineCooking.com

Visit our homepage often at FineCooking.com to see what's "on the front burner." This month, we have special Web collections on internationally inspired grilling and easier weeknight cooking using planned leftovers.

ON THE FRONT BURNER

Cooking for Today and Tomorrow

The concept of planned leftovers is a busy cook's best friend. These innovative recipes and ideas may make leftover night your favorite dinner of the week.

RECIPES

Seared rib-eye steak becomes a spicy Vietnamese soup

Five pasta dinners from one versatile sauce

Three fresh takes on chicken salad

Creamy risotto is transformed into crisp croquettes



TIPS & TOOLS

Getting the most from leftover chicken

Smart storage containers



ON THE FRONT BURNER

Global Grilling

Virtually every world cuisine has some tradition of cooking over an open fire, and we've gathered together recipes, ingredients, and tools from those traditions. What better time than summer to try these far-flung ideas?

MENUS AND RECIPES

A backyard Tuscan feast

A variety of international skewers: lamb kebabs, chicken yakitori, and satay

Latin-style flank steak with chipotle butter

GREAT FINDS

A Greek cheese perfect for grilling

A Japanese-inspired charcoal oven

Book Preview

Explore the great diversity of America's own melting-pot grill culture in The Taunton Press's newest cookbook, *Barbecue Nation* by Fred Thompson, with home-grown grilling recipes from all over the country. Get a preview at FineCooking.com.

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almond-crusted chicken tender salad

for a delicious side or a filling entrée, enjoy a baby greens salad topped with almond-crusted chicken tenders and a sweet orange-teriyaki-honey dressing.

dressing ingredients

- 1/4 cup Kikkoman Teriyaki Marinade & Sauce
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- 1 tsp freshly grated orange peel

salad ingredients

- 1 lb chicken breast tenders
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp Kikkoman Teriyaki Marinade & Sauce
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup Kikkoman Panko Bread Crumbs
- 1/2 cup smoked almonds, finely chopped
- 2-3 tbsp vegetable oil
- 6 cups mixed baby salad greens
- 2 oranges, peeled and cut into segments

orange-teriyaki-honey dressing

Whisk together teriyaki sauce, olive oil, honey, vinegar and orange peel.

chicken salad

- 1 Season chicken tenders with pepper. Beat egg with teriyaki sauce in shallow bowl until well blended.
- 2 Place flour in shallow dish. Combine bread crumbs and almonds in another shallow dish.
- 3 Dust both sides of chicken with flour, then dip into egg mixture and finally coat with almond mixture.
- 4 In 12-inch skillet, heat 2 tbsp vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook 6 to 7 minutes, or until no longer pink in center, turning over once and adding more oil as needed.
- 5 Divide salad greens among 4 dinner plates. Arrange chicken and orange segments on greens. Serve with Orange-Teriyaki-Honey Dressing.

Serves 4



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I've been looking everywhere for microgreens. Where can I buy them? Will they soon be as available as mâche and frisée?

—Deb Cerami, Westfield, New Jersey

A Lee Jones responds: As their name implies, microgreens are the very small leaves of plants such as arugula, broccoli, radish, and mustard. They are harvested as 7- to 14-day-old seedlings, compared with baby greens, which grow about 45 days, and mature greens, which grow for 65 to 80 days. Many chefs have become fans of microgreens for their intense flavor and color. Because they are so delicate and so labor-intensive to harvest, microgreens are much more expensive than mature greens (\$40 a pound for microgreens versus \$4 a pound for baby lettuces), so you'll most likely see them used sparingly to garnish plates or add extra punch to sandwiches and pizza.

Microgreens dehydrate quickly and don't have much of a shelf life, so you can find them in only a few high-end markets or sold directly by the growers. Growing your own may be a more affordable option. Some seed companies—Johnny's Selected Seeds (JohnnySeeds.com), for instance—offer a mix of seeds that can be harvested at the micro stage. As more people experience microgreens in restaurants and want to use them at home, you'll most likely start to see them in farmers' markets.

Lee Jones is part owner of The Chef's Garden (Chefs-Garden.com) in Huron, Ohio, which grows more than 75 varieties of microgreens and 40 varieties of microherbs. They supply 400 chefs worldwide.

For a recent party, I chilled a bottle of white wine but then didn't open it. Is it best to leave it in the fridge or should I return it to my wine rack?

—S. Blasco, New York City

A Tim Gaiser responds: While it's fine to keep a bottle of wine chilled for a week or even two, the air inside a refrigerator is too dry to be a good long-term place to store wine. After about six weeks, the cork will dry out, shrink, and allow air into the bottle, oxidizing the wine. (The exception: If the

bottle has a synthetic cork or screw cap, it won't have this shrinkage problem.)

So rather than letting the bottle of wine languish in the refrigerator, why not find a reason to drink up? If you don't think you'll have an opportunity to open it within two weeks, you should remove the bottle from the refrigerator to enjoy at a future time. The temporary chill will have little effect on a wine unless it's a Champagne or white wine that's older than about three years.

Master sommelier Tim Gaiser is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking.

What is seven-spice pepper? Is it related to five-spice powder?

—Carrie Herting, Bayport, New York

A Patty Erd responds: These two Asian spice mixtures share one common ingredient: Sichuan pepper. Seven-spice pepper is a Japanese seasoning also called *shichimi togarashi*. The blend usually includes Sichuan peppercorns, cayenne, black or white sesame seed (sometimes both), poppy seed, dried orange peel, nori (a type of seaweed), and hemp seed. Fragrant, with a pungent flavor, it is used as a condiment for soba noodles or soups and is sprinkled on grilled meats and fish to counterbalance fatty flavors. You can buy it at most Asian markets and some well-stocked grocery stores, or by mail order.

Five-spice powder, often called Chinese five-spice powder, contains Sichuan pepper as well as cinnamon, star anise, fennel, and cloves. Found in Asian markets and most supermarkets, it's used in Cantonese barbecue marinades, in braised dishes, and on roasted meats.

Until two years ago it was illegal to import Sichuan peppercorns into the United States, so many versions of both spice blends substituted ginger or regular black pepper. Check the label of your spice mix to make sure you're buying what you want.

Patty Erd is co-owner of The Spice House, a seasoning store with four retail locations in the Midwest and online at TheSpiceHouse.com. ♦

Have a question of general interest about cooking? Send it to Q&A, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by email to fcqa@taunton.com, and we'll find a cooking professional with the answer.

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Poblanos

These beauties taste best roasted

BY RUTH LIVELY

If you asked me to name one chile pepper I couldn't do without, I'd have to say it's the poblano. I like cooking with all kinds of chiles, but the rich, sweet flavor of poblanos and the complexity they add to a dish make them a favorite in my kitchen.

About the size of small bell peppers, poblanos have glossy dark-green skins and wide shoulders that taper sharply to a point. Although they do turn red when mature, at the market you'll find them only in their green stage. Poblanos are typically mild with just a bit of zing, but their heat level varies depending on growing conditions (warmer climates and more sunlight can increase the heat), so you'll occasionally come across spicy ones.

When buying poblanos, look for firm peppers with shiny skins. Avoid any with wrinkled skins, soft flesh, or shriveled stems. Stored in the crisper drawer in a loosely closed plastic bag, they'll last for about a week.

Bring out the best flavor and texture by cooking

Poblanos are most commonly roasted and peeled before being added to a dish. (For how to roast poblanos, see the sidebar opposite.) When raw, they have a thin but tough skin and

a pungent, grassy flavor with a trace of bitterness that disappears during cooking. Roasted poblanos, on the other hand, have a deep, sumptuous flavor and a pleasant, velvety texture.

Roasted poblanos are fantastic with cheese, especially ones that melt, like Cheddar, Monterey Jack, and Gruyère—think quesadillas and grilled cheese sandwiches—but they complement soft or crumbly cheeses like ricotta, queso fresco, and goat cheese, too. They make a great side dish with grilled pork, chicken, and beef, as well as shrimp, crab, and eggs. And they're especially good tossed with corn, summer squash, and starchy foods like potatoes, rice, and beans. Lime, garlic, and cilantro are also classic flavor partners, but don't stop there: basil, chives, oregano, thyme, cumin, coriander, and paprika are good with poblanos, too.

Strips of roasted poblanos, usually combined with sautéed white onion (and sometimes chopped garlic), are called *rajas*, which means strips in Spanish. You can serve *rajas* as a side dish or in fillings for quesadillas (see the recipe at right), tacos, burritos, and even omelets. The poblano also stars in most renditions of chiles rellenos, the classic Mexican stuffed and fried peppers.



Did you know?

Ancho chiles (or just anchos) are dried ripe poblanos. They have a deep, rich, peppery flavor with a slight chocolate undertone.



Quesadillas with Roasted Poblanos & Onions (*Rajas*)

Serves four as a main course, six to eight as an appetizer.

2 small fresh poblanos
1 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. vegetable oil
½ large white onion, thinly sliced lengthwise (about 1½ cups)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
Four 8-inch flour tortillas
2 cups grated Monterey Jack cheese (about 8 oz.)
½ cup loosely packed fresh cilantro
½ cup sour cream

Roast and peel the poblanos following the directions in the sidebar at top right. Slice them into ¼-inch-wide strips and put them in a small bowl.

Put a baking sheet in the oven and heat the oven to 150°F (or its lowest setting).

Make the rajas: Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil in a 10- or 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring frequently, until soft and lightly browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the poblano strips, season with a generous pinch of salt and a few grinds of

pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the peppers are heated through, 1 to 2 minutes more. Transfer to a plate and wipe the skillet clean.

Make the quesadillas: Heat ½ tsp. of the oil in the skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add one tortilla and scatter over it a quarter of the cheese, a quarter of the poblano mixture, and a quarter of the cilantro. When the tortilla smells toasty and the bottom is browned in spots, in 1 or 2 minutes, fold it in half, pressing it with a spatula to flatten it. Transfer to the baking sheet in the oven to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining ingredients to make three more quesadillas. Cut each quesadilla into wedges and serve with the sour cream on the side.

Roasted poblanos will last
 about a week, covered, in
 the refrigerator.

How to roast poblanos

You can roast poblanos on a gas burner, a hot grill, or under a broiler. Whatever method you choose, your goal is to blister and char the skin all over.

Blacken the peppers. Turn a burner to high and char the poblanos directly over the flame, turning them with tongs as soon as each side becomes fully blackened. It will take 6 to 8 minutes per pepper.

If you don't have a gas stove, you can char poblanos similarly over a hot grill fire or lay them on a foil-lined baking sheet and char them under a hot broiler, turning them with tongs.

Steam and peel. Immediately after roasting, put the poblanos in a bowl, cover, and set aside to steam and loosen the skins. When cool enough to handle, peel the charred skin off with your hands or a small paring knife. Pull out and discard the stems and seed clusters.

More ways with roasted poblanos

Punch up scrambled eggs by stirring in *rajas* (recipe at left) or thin strips of roasted poblanos and chopped cilantro.

Toss together a refreshing salad of diced roasted poblanos, grilled corn, and diced red onion dressed with an olive oil and lime juice vinaigrette and garnished with plenty of chopped cilantro.

Whip up a southwestern-style grilled cheese sandwich with large pieces of roasted poblano, Cheddar, thick slices of grilled red onion, and some arugula. Spread the bread with mayonnaise spiked with a garlic-cilantro-ancho purée.

Make a green rice pilaf by sautéing chopped onion and garlic and then adding rice, followed by a purée of roasted poblanos and cilantro thinned with chicken broth.

Ruth Lively cooks, writes, and gardens in New Haven, Connecticut. ♦

How much wine do I need?

Plan on two 5-ounce glasses per person, or about a bottle for every two people. You'll also want to purchase a bottle or two more than you think you'll need, because you don't want to run short on wine in the middle of the meal.

Finding inexpensive wines

Your local wine retailer is a good place to start when looking for the best wine values. He or she will be able to steer you to the best bargains and new releases. It also pays to explore wines and grapes you haven't encountered before. Many of the up-and-coming wine regions around the world produce excellent wines at affordable prices, because they have yet to be discovered by mass markets.

Buying a Mixed Case (or Two) for Your Summer Cookout

BY TIM GAISER

In the summer, I try to simplify my life as much as possible. And when it comes to outdoor entertaining, there's one small thing that really helps: buying a mixed case or two of wine. That way, I can relax, knowing that I won't have to make a rushed trip to the wine shop and that I have a nice assortment that will please a large crowd.

The challenge is to find good-quality wines that will make everyone happy without breaking the bank. You also need to look for wines that feel right for drinking outdoors; they should be light, refreshing, and cool—even the reds.

Here are a few guidelines that will make your search for great outdoor-dining wines as easy as summer itself.

What makes a good summer wine

Wines for a cookout should be easy to sip, easy to pair with a variety of foods (from cold salads to hearty fare from the grill), and easy to serve to a crowd. They should be easy on the wallet, too. Stick with wines that are \$12 or less, as you can rack up a pretty hefty bill if you fill your case with pricey bottles.

I'm always on the lookout for whites that offer vibrant, youthful fruit and crisp acidity with little or no oak. Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, and Albariño are especially good. Generally, I find Chardonnay too rich for summer sipping. But if I can find a lightly oaked or unoaked bottle, I'll add it to the mix. My vote also goes to dry, crisp rosés from southern France or Spain.

These wines are generally made from the Grenache grape, which produces some of the tastiest pink wines.

My favorite summer reds are those with lots of fruit and moderate spice and oak notes. Pinot Noir is a personal favorite, not only because it's delicious slightly chilled but also because it goes well with outdoor cuisine. Lighter Côtes du Rhône wines made from a blend of Grenache and other grapes are also easy-drinking and versatile. Zinfandel and Syrah (or Shiraz) are a bit heartier but perfect with anything from the grill. Whatever your choice, try to avoid wines that are overly alcoholic (anything over 15% alcohol), tannic, or oaky. All three of these elements make for robust wines that tend to overwhelm most summer fare.

Customize your case to the menu

Consider what you'll be serving and choose two or three types of wines that match the food but are different enough to please a variety of palates. If it's chicken or seafood on the grill, for example, fill your case with bottles of Sauvignon Blanc, a lightly oaked Chardonnay, and maybe a light Côtes du Rhône. If you're cooking burgers, steaks, or other red meats, look mainly for Rhône blends, Zinfandels, or Shiraz, with maybe a sturdy white Viognier in the mix. It's always nice to include a couple of bottles of a good sparkler to serve as an aperitif, as well as a bottle or two of a dry rosé, which pairs well with almost anything.

Great picks for a mixed case

Here are some of my current favorites for summer entertaining.
(Retail prices are approximate.)

A sparkler

**NV Rotari Brut Arte
Italiana, Italy, \$11**

Sparkling wine is a great way to start any alfresco dinner, and this is one of the best sparkling values around.

Whites

**2006 Geyser Peak
Sauvignon Blanc,
California, \$10**

This is a quintessential Sauvignon Blanc, bursting with vibrant tropical and citrus fruit. Try it with composed salads with goat cheese or cold poached salmon with fresh dill.

**2005 Burgans Albariño,
Rias Baixas, Spain, \$12**

Albariño is the most popular Spanish white today, thanks to its orange and peach fruit and mineral notes. The Burgans is delicious as an aperitif and also great with shellfish, smoked fish, or light pasta salads.

**2005 Pepperwood Grove
Viognier, California, \$9**

This is a true find: a good, inexpensive Viognier with lush apricot and melon fruit and spice and lime zest notes. Try it with grilled chicken or spice-rubbed grilled turkey cutlets.

**2006 Penfolds Koonunga
Hill Chardonnay,
Australia, \$10**

This the ultimate crowd-pleasing Chardonnay, with ripe apple and tropical fruit and just the right amount of oak. Pair it with cold shrimp and pasta salads or just about anything except red meat.

A rosé

**2005 Bodegas Muga
Rosado, Rioja, Spain, \$11**

Tempranillo-based rosados from Spain are some of the best summer wines around, with their tart red-berry flavors and mineral notes. They're also great picnic wines and perfect with everything from cold pasta salads to pizza and sandwiches.

Reds

**2005 Beringer Founders'
Estate Pinot Noir,
California, \$12**

Supple, velvety, and spicy, this is one of the great values in Pinot Noir. Enjoy a glass with friends before dinner, then try it with grilled swordfish or salmon.

**2005 Three Thieves
Zinfandel, California, \$11**

I can't think of a better summer red than this Zinfandel, with a screw cap for easy cookout pouring. It's perfect with anything from the grill, including burgers, ribs, and sausages.

**2005 Chapoutier Côtes
du Rhône "Belleruche,"
France, \$11**

This spicy, rich Grenache blend is a classic summer red. Try it with grilled chicken or Italian sausages.

**2005 Woop Woop Shiraz,
South Eastern Australia,
\$11**

With jammy blackberry, strawberry, and spice flavors and a touch of oak, this Shiraz is a natural with grilled beef, lamb, or spice-rubbed pork loin.

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Contributing editor Tim Gaiser is a master sommelier. ♦

A different whole grain

Made with 100% whole farro, a grain similar to speltz, this spaghetti is amazingly sweet, rich, and nutty. And what's best, it lacks the assertive flavor of whole-wheat pasta. Think great nutritional benefits sans the strong wheateness. Toss it with any sauce you would pair with regular pasta. *Rustichella d'Abruzzo farro spaghetti*, \$5 for an 8.8-oz. pack at MarketHallFoods.com (888-952-4005).

Just like homemade tortellini

We love tortellini, but making it at home is a serious project. And until recently, we couldn't find a brand of packaged ones we really liked. Then we discovered Bertagni's porcini mushroom tortelloni, which is just a tad larger than tortellini, and we fell in love. Made with

real eggs, the pasta is silky and ultra-thin, with a rich, eggy flavor. The filling is earthy and intensely mushroomy yet surprisingly delicate and light. *Bertagni tortelloni*, about \$5 for an 8.8-oz. pack, is available at some *Whole Foods Markets* and at specialty food stores.

Update Your Pasta Pantry

Intriguing pastas and nifty pasta tools

BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO

Distinctively shaped

This short, twisty, dumpling-like pasta hailing from the northwestern coast of Italy is handmade with just durum wheat flour and water and then slowly air-dried. When cooked, it becomes pleasantly soft and plump while maintaining a nice, satisfying chew. It's fantastic paired with a vibrant, summery pesto sauce. *La Bella Angiolina trofie*, \$9.25 for a 1-pound bag at ChefsTools.com (866-716-2433).

Scoop pasta right out of the water

Carrying a heavy pot to the sink to drain pasta can be a hassle. That's why we like this handy colander: You can scoop pasta out of the water directly into a nearby saucepan or bowl. (Plus, all the water stays in the pot, so you never have to worry about reserving pasta water.) We find it particularly useful for gnocchi and filled pastas, which are too delicate to drain in a traditional colander and are easy to scoop out because they float when cooked. *Oxo Good Grips scoop colander, large* (\$19.99) and *small* (\$14.99) at Oxo.com (800-545-4411).

A sleek measuring tool for spaghetti

We like the cool design and convenience of this one- to four-portion stainless-steel spaghetti measure. Its two slim measuring components are joined in the middle and rotate flat, making it easy to stash in a drawer. *Typhoon Italian Job spaghetti measure*, \$10 at Typhoonus.com (877-897-4872). ♦



When Opportunity Knocks . . .



Gail had been working in the medical field, first as a medical assistant, then as a surgical tech. The long evening surgery hours resulted in limited time at home with her family. After years, a change was needed. She came across an ad about Personal Chefs, and having a passion for food, she decided to call. "I simply needed more time at home, and to reclaim my time as my own"

Gail enrolled with the Culinary Business Academy to obtain specialized business knowledge to secure her success with this new venture. "The day I got home from training, my sister hired me as a Personal Chef." Gail has never looked back. Cooking for a wide variety of clients allows both professional and personal satisfaction, plus time for herself. Gail's advice: "Have passion and faith in yourself. Do what you love and your clients will love you for doing it!"

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what's new



A clean cut

These new carbon-steel paring knives boast a coat of bright color, even on the blade, which makes them easy to spot on a counter or in a crowded knife drawer. The nonstick finish on the 4-inch blade helps it glide easily through cheeses and other sticky foods. I particularly like the colorful protective sheath, which helps keep the edge sharp and makes this knife a natural for a picnic. You can find these Kuhn Rikon knives in red, green, orange, blue, pink, and yellow at Amazon.com for \$8.

Memory aid

Keeping track of when you opened that carton of chicken broth (and when it's time to toss it) is easier with this compact digital timer. Outfitted with a magnet or suction cup, it attaches to plastic storage containers or jar lids. With the reset of a button, it counts hours and days. I found it convenient for fridge and pantry staples like soy milk, bacon, and vinaigrettes, taking the guesswork out of how long ago they were opened or made. The timers display up to 99 days and run on a replaceable battery that lasts about 18 months. Sold two to a pack for \$10, the timers are available at HowManyDaysAgo.com.



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BY LISA WADDLE

Steamer folds for easy storage

Silicone versions of kitchen staples have flooded the housewares stores lately, but here's an update worth considering. Unlike folding metal steamers, this silicone version won't scratch nonstick cookware, and it's flexible enough to fit in pans from 4½ inches to 8½ inches in diameter. There's no center post—just three silicone legs—on this dishwasher-safe steamer, which is heat-resistant up to 650°F. Best of all, you can fold it or stuff it in a drawer for storage. For a list of stores carrying the Chef'n SleekStor VeggiSteam, which has a suggested retail price of \$10, go to Chefn.com.



great for grilling



Paper planks

Grilling on aromatic wood planks gives meats and fish a subtle smoky flavor. These paper-thin, disposable slices of cedar wood are a nice alternative to investing in a whole piece of wood, or if you don't want to deal with cleaning and storing the wood. You soak the papers in water or wine for 10 minutes to make them pliable and prevent them from catching fire. Then you wrap them around fish, vegetables, chicken, or beef. The bundles go directly on grill grates or on a baking sheet in the oven. Salmon fillets picked up a delicate, woody flavor when wrapped in the papers, even baked in the oven. From Fire & Flavor Grilling Company, the papers are sold at Whole Foods Markets and come in two sizes: 6x6 inches, eight for \$10 (good for shrimp and tofu) and 6x9½ inches, four for \$10 (for larger pieces of meat and fish). You can also buy them at FireAndFlavor.com.

Point & shine

Grilling in the dark is never a good idea—you end up burning the food or yourself. The Lumatong lets you shine some light on the subject with an LED flashlight attached to 20-inch, heavy-duty grilling tongs. Developed by Steven Raichlen, author of *The Barbecue Bible*, the tongs shoot a small but bright beam of blue-tinted light at the press of a button. With wide scalloped ends and Bakelite handles that keep their cool, the tongs work well, despite a locking mechanism that was a bit uncomfortable on the pair I tried. The light snaps off for easy cleaning and can be used on other similar-size tongs. The Lumatong sells for \$20 at Store.Grilling4all.com.



5 things to do with an oversize spatula

If you haven't already added an oversize spatula to your collection, consider that its usefulness extends beyond the cookie sheet. Here are some suggestions:

- 1 **Moving a cake layer** from the rack to a decorating pedestal or serving plate.
- 2 **Lifting a whole fish** from a baking pan or the grill.
- 3 **Transferring pie dough** from the counter to a pie or tart pan.
- 4 **Flipping large pancakes.**
- 5 **Moving pizzas** in and out of the oven, as a stand-in for a pizza peel.



King Arthur Flour sells one called a cookie shovel for \$16 at KingArthurFlour.com.



Cleaning mitt for stainless steel

Creating the look of a professional kitchen is easy with stainless-steel appliances. Keeping those surfaces shiny is another matter. I find cleaning sprays for stainless steel drying to my skin, so I was eager to try this chemical-free solution from Simplehuman. It's a hand mitt made of microfiber that uses only water. You dampen one side of the mitt, wipe down the appliance, and then turn the mitt over and use the dry side to polish the surface. Little elbow grease is required to get a mirror finish. To clean, toss the mitt in the washing machine. The Simplehuman mitt is \$5, and you can buy it at Simplehuman.com.

Seeing clearly

Nothing gives a kitchen a cutting-edge look like a glass-door refrigerator. But for those times when your leftovers aren't quite ready for their close-up, the new Sub-Zero 601RG features a switch to dim or turn off the interior light. The see-through door goes a long way toward ending open-door fridge loitering, as does the alarm, which beeps if the door is left ajar for more than 30 seconds. The 20.1-cubic-foot capacity all-refrigerator sells for \$4,100 and comes in stainless steel or overlay to let you match your cabinets. Go to SubZero.com to find a dealer.



If your leftovers aren't up to general viewing, you can dim or turn off this refrigerator's interior light.

Muffin pan marries metal with silicone



This bakeware update is nice for small batches of muffins or cupcakes, because you don't have to fill the unused cups with water; just pop them out. It's also convenient to cool and transport the muffins in their own silicone jackets, which peel off easily and don't require any greasing. KitchenAid plans to offer a replacement set of silicone cups in the near future, in case you want to bake successive batches, or to replace those that have wandered off in school lunches. Available at Amazon.com for \$35.



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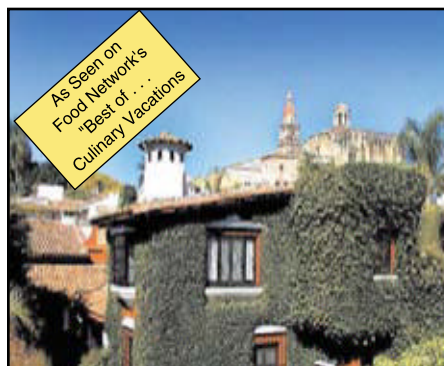


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review

Large Saucepans

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

A good-quality saucepan is a critical piece of any cookware ensemble. Most home cooks have one or two that are in the 1- to 3-quart range. Not so many of us, however, own a really large saucepan—at least 3 ½ quarts in capacity. It's not quite a stockpot, but it's roomy enough to boil potatoes or pasta, simmer a marinara, steam vegetables, or make polenta. It's good for making a large batch of oatmeal or rice or even a small batch of stew or a soup. In short, it's a pan you could use almost every day.

We focused this review on 3½- to 4½-quart saucepans with a helper handle. We consider this loop-shaped handle an essential with this size saucepan; it's a real asset when you have to carry a pan filled with boiling water and potatoes from the stove to the sink and then drain it into a colander. We also limited our focus to pans with a traditional stainless-steel cooking surface (not nonstick or anodized aluminum).

After putting six saucepans that met our criteria through their paces, we discovered that they all performed well overall. In every pan, onions sautéed evenly, rice didn't burn, water came to a boil at a similar rate, and the long handles stayed cool, though the helper handles did not. These results weren't all that surprising. All of the pans have an aluminum core, which is a superior heat conductor. And even large saucepans have a relatively small cooking surface (about 8 inches), making it easier for heat to be distributed evenly. Finally, since saucepans are most often used for moist-heat cooking like boiling, steaming, and simmering, and since water is a terrific transporter of heat, this would minimize any minor differences among the pans.

There was one pan that we gravitated to more than the others, the Cuisinox, and we've listed that as our favorite. But every other pan had something going for it, whether in shape, weight, or handle design. So instead of ranking them, as we usually do, we've grouped them as equals. All the pans here are dishwasher safe.

Overall Favorite Cuisinox Elite

3.8 quarts

\$102, KnifeMerchant.com

This was the pan we wanted to keep using. It strikes a nice balance in size and weight, and it's one of the better values of the bunch, too.

Highlights:

Measurement markings in liters and quarts on the pan's inside wall.

Rim gracefully rolled for smooth pouring.

Softly rounded interior bottom edge (where the base of the pan meets the wall), making it easy to scrape and stir with a wooden spoon or spatula.

Tempered-glass lid available for purchase at Cuisinox.com. (The pan comes with a traditional stainless steel lid.)



Induction-friendly pans

Several of the pans shown here work on induction cooktops, which are becoming a popular alternative to electric and gas (they're very responsive, safe, and energy efficient). To be compatible with induction, a pan must have a magnetic layer in the base (stainless steel, aluminum, and copper alone are not magnetic). One way to know is to put a magnet on the bottom of the pan. If it sticks well, the pan is induction friendly.

Any of these pans would make a fine choice

All-Clad Stainless

4 quarts

\$195, ChefsResource.com

Highlights:

Relatively deep (5 inches), which is useful for cooking potatoes or beans or anything that tends to foam up precariously, like caramel or soba noodles.

Lid fits snugly so that minimum steam escapes.

Compatible with induction cooktops.

Same size pan exists without a helper handle for \$10 less. (Go for the helper handle.)



KitchenAid Gourmet Excellence

4 quarts

\$140, CutleryAndMore.com

Highlights:

Relatively deep (5 inches), which is useful for cooking potatoes or beans or anything that tends to foam up precariously, like caramel or soba noodles.

Slightly curved rim prevents drips while pouring.

Handle's arch provides good leverage when lifting this bottom-heavy pan, but its defined edges can feel uncomfortable as you roll the pan to empty its contents.



Demeyere Apollo Silvinox

4.2 quarts

\$135, CooksWares.com

Highlights:

Base is wider than most (8¾-inch diameter), but the pot isn't so deep (4¼ inches), so it's ideal for sautéing larger quantities of onions and vegetables (say, for a soup) or browning meat for a ragù or chili.

Slightly rounded and extended rim prevents drips and dribbles.

Rounded handle is comfortable and not too long, which is a plus for storage.

Compatible with induction cooktops.



ScanPan Fusion 5

4 quarts

\$100, ScanPanCookware.com

Highlights:

Measurement markings in liters and quarts on the pan's inside wall.

Rounded bottom edge inside the pan for easier stirring.

Rolled rim for smoother pouring.

Relatively short handle makes it easier to store.

Compatible with induction cooktops.



Viking

4½ quarts

\$205, DifferentDrummersKitchen.com

Highlights:

Extra-large capacity with a wide base (8¾-inch diameter) and comparatively low sides (4¼ inches) make it well suited for sauces, soups, or stews that require an initial browning of ingredients.

At 4½ pounds (without the lid), it's the heaviest of the bunch.

Compatible with induction cooktops.

Dishwasher safe, but hand-washing is recommended.



Cleaning tip

Stainless-steel saucepans can sometimes develop white, cloudy spots on the surface. These are mineral deposits left after boiling water, particularly hard tap water. Clean the pan with a little vinegar and warm water and the spots will easily wash away.

Maryellen Driscoll is Fine Cooking's editor at large. ♦



Greg crafts his Ramstein wheat beers—Blonde, Classic, and Winter—with the same meticulous care he witnessed in Germany.

Rich & Creamy German-Style Wheat Beers

from an American Microbrewery

BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO

Greg Zaccardi studied to be a chemist but somehow ended up brewing beer. “There’s actually a lot of chemistry involved in beer making,” he says by way of explanation. “You have to know how certain enzymes and molecules work and how to control each step to get the flavor and body you want.”

Greg is the founder and driving force behind the High Point Brewing Company in Butler, New Jersey, the first wheat-only microbrewery in the United States—at least when he started it in 1996. Now he also brews a couple of lagers and a pale ale.

When asked why wheat beer, Greg credits his German girlfriend (now his wife), who took him on his first trip to southern Germany. There he tasted some amazing wheat beers, called *hefeweizen*. It was the desire to recreate those sweet, rich flavors and creamy texture that led him to apprentice at a small German wheat brewery and then to fly straight home and start making his own brews.

Greg crafts his Ramstein wheat beers—Blonde, Classic, and Winter—with the same meticulous care he witnessed in Germany: He tailors the ratio of wheat to barley and of light- to dark-roast grains to each type of beer and determines the quantity of hops needed to achieve the flavor balance he’s after.

“My goal is to produce an elegant beer rooted in the European tradition but with a personality of its own, a beer that showcases



1 To make wheat beer, Greg Zaccardi uses 50% malted wheat and 50% malted barley, which he pours into a hopper.

the great ingredients we use,” says Greg. His grains and hops come from Germany, and he uses a proprietary yeast from a small brewery in Bavaria. “Yeast is critical,” he says. And this one gives his unfiltered weizens their distinctive overtones of banana, apple, and clove. Ramstein beers are available in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. For information, visit RamsteinBeer.com or call 973-838-7400.



2 A mill cracks the grain, creating the "mash," which is mixed with water in a large tank. Greg raises the water temperature incrementally, activating enzymes that convert starches into sugar.



3 Once the conversion is completed, three-quarters of the mash is pumped into a vessel called a lauter tank, while the remaining quarter is boiled, or "decocted," to deepen its flavor and color (boiling time varies with the type of beer). The decocted mash is transferred back to the lauter tank to combine with the rest of the batch. The lauter tank acts like a coffee filter, slowly separating the solids from the sweet liquid.



4 Head brewer Paul Scarmazzo pours hops into the liquid to add bitterness. Hops boil with the liquid for about two hours, before the wort (liquid with hops) is pumped into fermentation tanks.



5 Fermentation begins when Greg or Paul adds yeast, which consumes the sugars and produces carbon dioxide (hence natural carbonation), alcohol, and flavor. Greg (at left) samples the liquid to monitor sugar concentration and clarity. The beer is ready when the sugar level has decreased by about 75%. He doesn't filter his wheat beers before bottling. ♦



Winning tip

Ice cream sandwiches at the ready

My family loves ice cream sandwiches, so when I make homemade ice cream, I transfer it into zip-top freezer bags and lay them flat in the freezer. Once the ice cream freezes, I peel off the bag and use a biscuit cutter to cut out rounds of ice cream to sandwich between two cookies. You can do this with store-bought ice cream, too

—Coreen Franke,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

A prize for the best tip

We want your best tips—we'll pay for the ones we publish—and we'll give a prize to the cleverest tip in each issue. Write to Tips, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506 or email fc tips@taunton.com.

The prize for this issue's winner: A 6½-quart Perfect Plus Pressure Cooker from WMF with insert, trivet, and instructional DVD; value, about \$220.



A great way to clean hands after handling chiles

I've found an easy way to clean my hands thoroughly after chopping hot peppers: I rub a small amount of vegetable or olive oil on my fingers for a minute and then wash them with a little dish soap. The oil removes the capsaicin, which is what irritates the skin and can so easily be transferred to your eyes or mouth.

—Sarah Kingston,
Provo, Utah

Hot packs keep picnic items warm

I went to a potluck last summer and needed to keep corn on the cob hot until dinnertime. I heated a hot pack in the microwave (make sure yours is the microwavable kind) and put it in the bottom of a small insulated cooler. Then I wrapped each cob of corn in aluminum foil, piled them on the hot pack, and set a platter on top. It was more than two hours before we ate, and the corn was still hot.

This idea would also work with casserole dishes right from the oven. Wrapping the dish in foil offers an extra layer of insulation.

—Valarie Pelissero,
Portland, Oregon

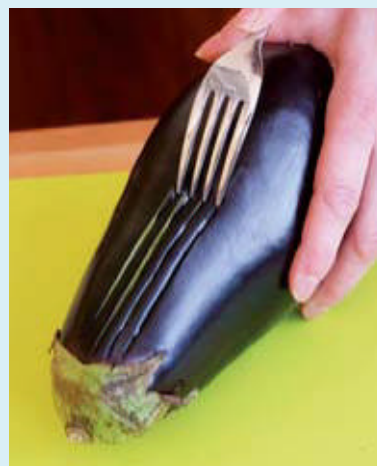
TOO GOOD TO FORGET

From *Fine Cooking* #10

Easier eggplant

When preparing eggplant—especially for grilling—I like to leave the skin on for flavor and because it helps keep the tender flesh from falling apart. But sometimes the skin can become a chewy mess. I compromise by scoring the entire eggplant from top to bottom with a dinner fork. The fork's closely spaced tines leave fine “stripes” on the eggplant's skin, not unlike the way cucumbers are often left with stripes of peel. When cooked, the skin is much more manageable.

—Michael Wodjenski,
New Milford, Connecticut





Keeping corn on the cob warm

Whenever I cook corn on the cob for a dinner party, I take the corn out of the boiling water with tongs, put the cobs in a colander, then set the colander over the cooking pot of water while I assemble the rest of the dinner. Even with the burner off, the steam from the boiled water keeps the corn moist and hot until it gets to the table.

—Nadia Collins, via email

Yogurt substitutes for buttermilk

I love the taste of buttermilk in baked goods, but somehow I never seem to have it on hand. However, I always have yogurt in the fridge and find it makes a good substitute when combined with milk. If the recipe calls for 1 cup of buttermilk, I use ½ cup milk combined with ½ cup yogurt. (Because buttermilk is low fat or nonfat, the yogurt and milk should be low fat or nonfat as well.)

—Catherine Subick, Philadelphia

Store nut butter jars upside down

I've found it's better to store my jars of natural nut butters upside down. This way the solids collect at the top of the jar and the oil separates to the bottom. Stirring to reincorporate the oil is easier if you don't have to scrape stiff solids from the bottom of the jar.

—Anne Huber, West Lafayette, Indiana

Grapefruit knife carves bread easily

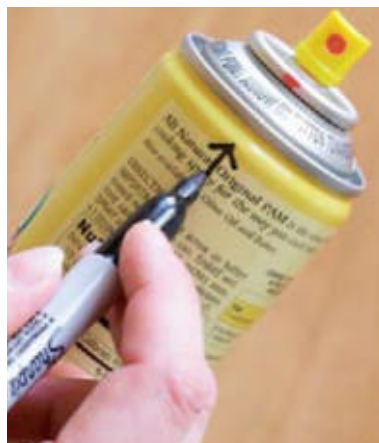
I used to have a hard time cutting neat lids out of loaves of bread to create bread bowls for soups and dips. Because a grapefruit knife is serrated on both sides, it quickly cuts through the top of a loaf and gives me a perfect lid every time.

—Tina Petok, Davidson, North Carolina

Microwave long-cooking vegetables before grilling

We love to grill zucchini, carrots, and potatoes, but too often we find that the carrots and potatoes burn on the outside before fully cooking through. Now, before grilling, I par-cook potatoes, carrots, and other hard vegetables for a couple of minutes in the microwave on high to give them a head start.

—Geoff Mayo, Toronto



Protect yourself from cooking spray

Occasionally, when wrestling with a stubborn cap on a can of cooking spray, the cap will finally pop off, causing the nozzle to spray—usually all over my clothes. To avoid this, I use a sticker or marker to indicate on the side of the can which way the nozzle is facing. I always turn the nozzle away from me when removing the cap, and this way, my clothes don't suffer.

—Siobhan Crosby, Portland, Oregon

TWO TIPS FOR CORN COB HOLDERS:

Use Styrofoam to organize corn holders



I grew tired of searching for my corn cob holders and getting pricked by their sharp ends, so I made a holder for them. I cut a piece of Styrofoam to fit in my utensil drawer and stuck the holders in the Styrofoam. Now they're easy to find.

—Lisa Spraggins, Dallas

Stick corn holders in a cork

After pricking my fingers too many times searching for corn cob holders in my drawer, I now store each pair in a wine cork. One goes on each end of the cork, and they're easy to spot in my drawer.

—Cindy Johnston, Lakewood, Washington ♦

Mini burgers, pizzettas,
and skewers—choose
one for a starter or make
them all for a party

BY ALLISON EHRI

Come summertime, most of us turn to the grill to do the heavy lifting, whether it's for hamburgers, hot dogs, or baby back ribs. But as someone who loves to both cook *and* be outdoors as much as possible, I use the grill for just about anything. My latest discovery is how great the grill is for making all kinds of nifty appetizers, from shrimp skewers to tiny tuna burgers and pizzas. You can grill up one or two as predinner noshes, or you can make a



Appetizers, Hot

whole bunch and stagger them throughout a party, as I do (see my prep strategy on p. 38). These tasty little nibbles are small enough that they disappear in one or two bites—no plates or forks required (just napkins)—and they're guaranteed crowd-pleasers.

Another reason these cute bites are perfect for an outdoor party is that they're super quick to prepare and take only minutes to cook—in fact, you can do most of the work ahead, so you have time to socialize with your guests. The trick is to keep things simple. That's not to say you can't throw in a twist or two to make these bites feel a little special.

Both skewers, for example, benefit from the subtle smokiness of a pimentón (smoked paprika) vinaigrette used as a marinade. I add mint to give fresh nuance to the aioli that accompanies the mini tuna burgers. And a splash of Pernod or sambuca (both anise-flavored liqueurs) really boosts the fennel-seed flavor of the mini pizzas topped with fresh tomato, olives, and aged goat cheese. I also love to play with contrasting flavors and textures: The pancetta and pineapple skewers are both sweet and salty, and the almond and cheese inside the stuffed apricots provide a nice crunchy-melty contrast.





Off the Grill

Shrimp Skewers

Serves six; yields 12 skewers.

36 shrimp (21 to 25 per lb.; about 1½ lb. total), peeled (tail segment left on) and deveined
Twelve 8-inch bamboo skewers, soaked in water
1 recipe Pimentón Vinaigrette (see below)

Thread three shrimp onto each skewer. Lay the skewers in a large Pyrex baking dish (or other large nonreactive container) and pour the pimentón vinaigrette over the skewers, turning them to coat completely. Marinate for at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator.

Heat a gas grill to medium high or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire. Grill the skewers (covered on a gas grill, uncovered on a charcoal grill), flipping once, until the shrimp are just cooked through, about 4 minutes total.

Make ahead: The shrimp can be skewered up to 1 day ahead and marinated up to 4 hours ahead and refrigerated.

Pimentón Vinaigrette

Yields about ½ cup.

Pimentón is smoked Spanish paprika. You can find it in specialty food stores or online (see Where To Buy It, p. 73).

1 large clove garlic
Generous ½ tsp. kosher salt
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1½ Tbs. fresh lemon juice
1 Tbs. sherry vinegar
1 tsp. sweet (dulce) pimentón
½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Chop the garlic, sprinkle it with the salt, and mash it into a paste with the side of a chef's knife (or use a mortar and pestle). In a medium bowl, mix the garlic paste, oil, lemon juice, vinegar, pimentón, and pepper.

Make ahead: This can be made up to 2 days ahead and refrigerated.





Pancetta & Pineapple Skewers

Serves six; yields 12 skewers.

**4 oz. pancetta, cut into twenty-four
½- to ¾-inch cubes**

**6 oz. pineapple (about ½ small pineapple),
peeled and cut into twenty-four
½- to ¾-inch cubes**

**Twelve 8-inch bamboo skewers, soaked
in water**

1 recipe Pimentón Vinaigrette (p. 37)

Put the pancetta in a small pot, cover it with cold water, and bring to a boil. As soon as the water boils, drain the pancetta in a colander and let it cool slightly.

Heat a gas grill to medium high or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire. Thread two pan-

cetta cubes and two pineapple cubes onto each skewer, alternating the pancetta and the pineapple. Put the skewers in a large Pyrex baking dish (or other large nonreactive container) and pour the Pimentón Vinaigrette over the skewers, turning to coat them completely. Grill the skewers (covered on a gas grill, uncovered on a charcoal grill), checking for flare-ups and turning and flipping the skewers as necessary to cook on all sides until the pancetta is crisp, about 6 minutes total.

Make ahead: The skewers can be assembled up to 1 day ahead and marinated up to 4 hours ahead and refrigerated.

Make it a party

Here's a strategy for doing it all.

Up to 2 days ahead

Make a double batch of Pimentón Vinaigrette.

Soak the skewers and toothpicks.

Up to 1 day ahead

Assemble all the skewers and the apricots.

Prep everything for the pizzettas but the dough.

Up to 4 hours ahead

Marinate the shrimp skewers.

Coat the pineapple skewers in the vinaigrette.

Cut the pitas.

Pick the mint leaves.

Up to 2 hours ahead

Make the aioli and refrigerate.

Shape the tuna burgers and refrigerate.

Set up a work surface near the grill.

Up to 1 hour ahead

Roll and cut the pizza dough and refrigerate.

Season the apricots.

Mini Tuna Burgers with Mint-Caper Aioli on Pita Triangles

Serves six to eight; yields about 18.

You can make the aioli with a pasteurized egg if raw eggs are an issue.

1 large egg, separated

2 Tbs. capers, rinsed

1 large clove garlic, coarsely chopped

1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

¼ tsp. kosher salt; more as needed

⅛ tsp. freshly ground black pepper; more as needed

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil; more for brushing

2 Tbs. chopped fresh mint, plus 18 large leaves for garnish

1 lb. tuna steak, cut into 1-inch chunks

3 regular pitas, each cut into 6 triangles

Put the egg yolk, capers, garlic, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a food processor and purée until smooth. With the motor running, slowly drizzle the oil through the feed tube to form an emulsion. Stop the motor, add the 2 Tbs. chopped mint, and pulse to combine. Spoon ¼ cup of the aioli into a small bowl.

Add the tuna and egg white to the food processor bowl and pulse until just chopped. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper or parchment. Drop 18 rounds of the tuna mixture by heaping tablespoons onto the baking sheet. Use your hands to shape the mounds into mini burgers about ⅓ inch thick.

Heat a gas grill to high or prepare a hot charcoal fire.

Brush one side of the tuna burgers with oil and season with salt and pepper. Gently flip the burgers and oil and season the other side. Put the pita triangles on another baking sheet, brush both sides with oil and sprinkle both sides with a little salt and pepper. Grill the



pitas on both sides until lightly browned and a little crisp but still pliable, 1 to 2 minutes total. Transfer to a serving platter.

Grill the burgers (covered on a gas grill, uncovered on a charcoal grill) on one side until they have nice grill marks, about 2 minutes. Flip the burgers, loosening them with a metal spatula if necessary, and grill the other side until marked and just cooked through, about 2 minutes more.

While the burgers are cooking, spread a little of the reserved aioli inside each pita. As the burgers come off the grill, tuck one into each pita along with a mint leaf and serve immediately.

Make ahead: The burgers can be shaped up to 2 hours ahead and refrigerated.



Bacon-Wrapped Stuffed Apricots

Serves six to eight; yields 24.

Apricot sizes can vary; if yours are on the smaller side, just trim the cheese a bit and squish it in.

24 dried apricots (about 7 oz.)
3 oz. plain Havarti, cut into 1/2- to 3/4-inch squares 1/4 inch thick
24 almonds (about 1 oz.)
12 strips bacon (about 12 oz.), cut in half crosswise
24 toothpicks, soaked in water
Freshly ground black pepper

Heat a gas grill to high or prepare a hot charcoal fire.

Pry open the apricots and put a piece of cheese and an almond into each one. Wrap a piece of bacon around each apricot, trimming as necessary so it overlaps by 1/2 inch, and secure it with a toothpick. Season the apricots all over with pepper.

Reduce the grill heat to medium (scatter the coals a bit or raise the grate if using charcoal). Use tongs to grill the apricots on all sides with the grill open, propping them between the bars to hold them up on the narrow sides. Move the apricots around often to avoid flare-ups. Cook until the bacon is crisp all over, about 6 minutes total. Serve immediately and remind guests to remove the toothpicks.

Make ahead: The apricots can be assembled up to 1 day ahead and refrigerated.



Tomato & Olive Pizzettas with Fennel Seeds & Aged Goat Cheese

Serves six to eight; yields 18 mini pizzas.

You can find pizza dough in the grocery store, or try your favorite pizzeria—most will sell their dough. Sambuca or Pernod makes a nice sweet contrast with the salty cheese, and it brings out the flavor of the fennel.

Flour for the work surface
1 lb. pizza dough
Extra-virgin olive oil for brushing
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tsp. fennel seeds, coarsely chopped
One 1-inch-thick slice Bûcheron (about 6 oz.), cut into 36 thin wedges (if the cheese crumbles, let it warm to room temperature) or a log of fresh goat cheese, cut into thin rounds
14 pitted Kalamata olives, quartered
18 cherry or grape tomatoes, sliced into 1/4-inch rounds, ends discarded
Crushed red pepper flakes
1 1/2 tsp. sambuca or Pernod

Heat a gas grill to medium high or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire with the coals banked to one side to provide a cooler area on the grill.

On a well-floured surface roll out the pizza dough with a rolling pin until it's 1/8 inch thick. If the dough is very elastic and resists rolling, cover it with plastic and let it rest for about 5 minutes. You may have to repeat this step a few times until the dough is relaxed and willing to roll. Using a 3-inch ring cutter, cut the dough into 18 rounds. Discard the excess dough. Brush the top of the dough rounds with oil and sprinkle with salt,

pepper, and fennel seeds, pressing gently to make sure they adhere. Transfer the rounds to a baking sheet, fennel side up.

Working with half of the pizzettas at a time, grill them fennel side down (covered on a gas grill, uncovered on a charcoal grill) for 1 minute. Check the pizzettas: If they have puffed up, flatten them with a metal spatula. Brush the floured sides (which are facing up) with oil. Grill until the bottom is nicely browned and crisp, about 1 more minute. Loosen with a metal spatula, if necessary, and return the pizzettas, grilled side up, to the baking sheet. (If using a gas grill, turn the heat down to medium.)

Working quickly, top each with 2 wedges of Bûcheron, 3 olive pieces, 3 tomato slices, and a pinch of red pepper flakes. Use a small spoon to sprinkle each pizzetta with a few drops of sambuca or Pernod.

Return the pizzettas to the medium-heat gas grill or to the cooler side of a charcoal grill. Continue grilling, covered, until the pizzettas are crisp and the cheese is melted, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a platter and serve while you repeat with the remaining dough rounds.

Make ahead: The pizzetta toppings can be prepared up to 1 day ahead and refrigerated. The dough can be rolled and cut up to 1 hour ahead and refrigerated, covered.

Allison Ehri is Fine Cooking's test kitchen associate and food stylist. ♦



Sea Salt, Chile & Lime Butter



Lemon, Dill & Cucumber Sauce

Delicious Finishes

Follow these tips for perfectly grilled fish steaks, and serve them with your choice of four lively toppings

BY MARIA HELM SINSKEY

Eat more fish in the summer, and most often it's grilled; I love the nice caramelization and smoky flavor that the fire provides. Plus, the easy elegance of grilled fish makes it perfect for practically effortless entertaining, especially when jazzed up with full-flavored accompaniments like the ones featured here. Though all four toppings have very different flavor profiles and are made using different methods, they all make great mates for fish.

If the mention of "grill" and "fish" in the same sentence makes you nervous, maybe you've had the experience of having fish cling tenaciously to the grate, only to be torn when flipped. But a few important hints can prevent your fish from sticking and falling apart and ensure moist, beautiful results.

Instead of fillets, go for fish steaks. Fillets can work on the grill, but they can also be dicey. Fillets are trickier to grill because

they're cut parallel to the bone, which makes them more delicate and flaky. Fish steaks, on the other hand, are cross-cut, which makes them sturdier, firmer, and less prone to flaking (see *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 64, for more on fish steaks and fillets). Tuna, salmon, swordfish, and halibut are all in season during the summer. If you find wild salmon, grab it—it has more flavor and a better texture than farmed.

The thickness of the fish matters. A fish steak should be no less than 1 inch thick and ideally about 1¼ inches. This size cooks more slowly and evenly, so the fish stays nice and moist. If you don't see such steaks at the fish counter, ask your fishmonger to cut them for you. (If you can't find thick steaks, shorten the cooking time for the fish.)

Consider the fish's personality as you pair it with a topping. The topping recipes on p. 42 may be used with your choice of fish, which means you can pick what's freshest at the fish counter. However, I do have a

favorite pairing for each one. Rich and tangy, the caper-studded tarragon mayonnaise perks up lean, mild halibut, while the briny intensity of the olive relish cuts through the fattiness of grilled tuna. As the chile-lime butter melts over grilled salmon, it infuses the oily, meaty flesh with a spicy brightness. Finally, the delicate, fresh mix of lemon and dill in the cucumber sauce livens up grilled swordfish, which, though well loved, can use a flavor boost.

The next day, make a salad with the leftovers. Any tarragon mayonnaise, olive relish, or cucumber sauce you have left can be mixed with cold, leftover grilled fish for a salad or sandwich the next day. Flake the fish the way you might canned tuna and mix it with the sauce. If you didn't use all the lime butter, spread it on grilled bread or melt it and toss it with croutons to add to a salad.



Sun-Dried Tomato, Olive & Caper Relish



Tarragon-Scented Mayonnaise
with Cornichons & Capers

for Grilled Fish

Grilled Fish Steaks

Serves four to six.

I like salmon and tuna cooked medium rare, which means that salmon will be translucent in the center, and tuna will have a red band. Halibut and swordfish are best cooked through—firm to the touch and opaque throughout. Be sure to make your topping before starting to grill.

1½ Tbs. olive oil; more for brushing the grill

Four to six 1¼-inch-thick fish steaks (6 to 8 oz. each), such as tuna, salmon, swordfish, or halibut

1 tsp. kosher salt

1 topping of your choice (recipes on p. 42)

Clean and oil the grates on a gas grill following the instruc-

tions on p. 69 and heat the grill to medium high, or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire.

Meanwhile, generously coat both sides of the fish with the oil and season both sides with salt. Let the fish sit at room temperature for 15 minutes (while the grill heats). Grill the fish steaks directly over the heat source (covered on a gas grill, uncovered on a charcoal grill), without touching, until they have good grill marks, 2 to 4 minutes. Flip the steaks and grill until the second sides have good grill marks and the fish is done to your liking, another 2 to 4 minutes. (Check for doneness by slicing into one of the thicker pieces.) Serve immediately with the topping of your choice.

Tips for grilling fish

Grilled fish steaks are a wonderful choice for entertaining because you can grill them to your guests' individual preferences. Follow the tips below, and the steaks will look gorgeous, too.

Begin with a clean, well-oiled grill, and let it heat up.

A major culprit behind sticking fish is the debris left on the grates. Clean and oil the grill as described on p. 67 for best results. Hot grates keep fish from sticking by causing the proteins in the fish to contract and release, so be sure your grates are thoroughly heated before you start to grill.

Don't move the steaks for the first few minutes of cooking.

You need to give the side that's facing down time to cook (and contract) before turning the fish.

Use tongs and a spatula to move the fish steaks.

Tongs work really well for turning sturdy fish steaks, but sometimes a little unseen debris on the grill rack will cause the fish to stick. If this happens, slide a thin spatula underneath the stubborn spot to release it.

Cut into the fish to check for doneness. Once you've grilled a lot of fish steaks, you'll know by feel when they're done to your liking. If you're not there yet, cut into the side of the fish with a paring knife to see what's going on inside. (Poke it with your finger, too, so you learn what different donenesses feel like—the harder the flesh, the more done it is.)

Four ways to add flavor to fish

Tarragon-Scented Mayonnaise with Cornichons & Capers

Yields 1²/₃ cups, enough for six to eight servings.

This tangy tarragon-infused sauce complements mildly flavored fish like halibut or even tuna. Most mayonnaise is made with an egg yolk, but this recipe uses a whole egg, which gives the mayonnaise a looser consistency.

1 large egg
4 tsp. fresh lemon juice
¾ tsp. kosher salt; more as needed
Freshly ground black pepper
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
½ cup canola or vegetable oil
¼ cup finely chopped cornichons (or gherkins)
2 Tbs. chopped capers
1 Tbs. minced shallot
1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 Tbs. chopped fresh tarragon
½ tsp. sweet paprika

Whisk the egg, lemon juice, salt, and a few grinds of black pepper in a bowl until well

combined. Combine the oils and drizzle them into the egg mixture, whisking constantly. Once all the oil is added, the sauce should be shiny and thick. Fold in the remaining ingredients and season with salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate for up to 1 day before using.

Note: You can make the sauce with a pasteurized egg if raw eggs are an issue or with store-bought mayonnaise (use about 1 heaping cup in place of the egg and oils).



Sun-Dried Tomato, Olive & Caper Relish

Yields a generous 1 cup, enough for four to six servings.

This Mediterranean-inspired relish pairs nicely with most grilled fish. For a shortcut, pulse the tomatoes and olives a few times in a food processor and then add the remaining ingredients and pulse to combine.

½ cup finely chopped oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained
¼ cup finely chopped oil-cured olives
5 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
2½ Tbs. fresh lemon juice
1 Tbs. chopped capers
1 Tbs. minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 Tbs. minced shallot
2 tsp. minced fresh oregano
½ tsp. finely grated orange zest
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper



Combine all the ingredients, seasoning with salt and pepper to taste. You can make the relish up to 2 days ahead, which will allow the flavors to marry.

Note: The saltiness of the ingredients in this relish will vary, so make sure to adjust the seasonings to taste.

Lemon, Dill & Cucumber Sauce

Yields 2 cups, enough for six servings.

Delicate and light, this sauce, which has a loose texture that's somewhere between a vinaigrette and a salad, complements almost any grilled fish.

1 medium English cucumber, peeled and finely diced to yield 2 cups

2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
½ tsp. granulated sugar
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 Tbs. minced fresh dill
1 Tbs. minced shallot
2 tsp. minced fresh mint

Put the cucumber in a medium bowl. Add the lemon juice and the sugar, toss to combine, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Stir in the olive oil, dill, shallot, and mint, and add more salt and pepper if necessary. Let sit for 30 minutes to allow the flavors to marry. Taste for seasoning again just before serving and adjust if necessary.



Sea Salt, Chile & Lime Butter



2 tsp. fresh lime juice
1 tsp. coriander seeds, lightly toasted and coarsely ground
¾ tsp. freshly grated lime zest
½ tsp. coarse sea salt, like fleur de sel or sel gris
½ tsp. piment d'Espelette chile powder or crushed red pepper flakes
¼ tsp. minced garlic

Beat the butter in a small bowl with a spoon to loosen it. Mix in the remaining ingredients until they're evenly distributed. Scrape the butter onto a sheet of parchment or plastic wrap and roll it into a neat log, using the parchment or plastic as a guide. Twist the ends and refrigerate the butter until firm, about 1 hour. Keep the butter chilled until ready to use.

Yields about ½ cup, enough for four to six servings.

The subtle spiciness of French Basque piment d'Espelette chile powder (see Where to Buy It, p. 73) is perfect for this butter, though crushed red pepper flakes make a fine substitute. Try the butter on salmon or halibut.

¼ lb. (8 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
3 Tbs. finely chopped fresh cilantro

How to use: Slice thin rounds from the butter log and top the fish with a couple of them the second it comes off the grill.

Maria Helm Sinskey is the author of *The Vineyard Kitchen: Menus Inspired by the Seasons*. ♦



Quick Pastas with a Kick

A little heat punches up the flavor of pastas made with summer favorites: corn, tomatoes, and zucchini

BY SCOTT CONANT

People often ask me what I cook at home, and I never know what to tell them. I think they're expecting to hear all about fancy, complicated dishes. But the truth is that with two busy restaurants, I don't spend much time at the stove when I'm home. What you'll most likely find me making when I get some time off is a simple, satisfying pasta, preferably one that's quick to make but still packed with flavor—just like the ones here.

To get great flavor quickly, I sauté summer vegetables like corn, tomatoes, and zucchini and boost their flavor with bold ingredients like caramelized onions, goat

cheese, and grated pecorino. I also like to add a little heat to give my pastas an extra kick. This can come in the form of spicy sausage paired with summer squash, a pinch of cayenne in a marinade for shrimp, or even a little jalapeño added to a sauté of corn, green beans, and caramelized sweet onions. But don't worry: While these pastas are spicy, they're not fiery hot.

Finally, to bind the ingredients and create a well-balanced pasta with a saucy consistency, I always reserve some of the cooking water before I drain the pasta and add a little back when I toss the pasta with the other ingredients (see p. 45 for details).



Spaghetti with Spicy Shrimp, Cherry Tomatoes & Herbed Breadcrumbs

Serves four.

Fresh mint adds a bright, unexpected twist to this light, summery pasta.

- 1/3 cup plus 4 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh chives**
- Heaping 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes**
- Pinch cayenne**
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt; more as needed**
- 1 lb. raw shrimp (21 to 25 per lb.), peeled, deveined, and cut crosswise into quarters**
- 1/4 cup coarse fresh breadcrumbs (made from a baguette or other artisan bread)**
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh mint**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 medium shallots, finely chopped**
- 1 lb. dried thin spaghetti**
- 4 cups cherry or grape tomatoes (2 pints), halved**

In a large bowl, combine 2 Tbs. of the olive oil, 2 tsp. of the parsley, the chives, red pepper flakes, cayenne, and salt. Add the shrimp and stir to coat evenly. Cover the bowl with plastic and marinate in the refrigerator for about 20 minutes.

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat.

In a small sauté pan, heat 2 Tbs. of the olive oil over medium heat. Add the breadcrumbs and cook, stirring frequently, until lightly browned, 1 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a

small bowl and let cool. Mix the remaining 1 Tbs. parsley, the mint, a grinding of pepper, and a pinch of salt into the breadcrumbs.

Heat the remaining 1/3 cup olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the shallots and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, 2 to 4 minutes.

Put the spaghetti in the boiling water and cook until just shy of al dente, about 5 minutes.

While the spaghetti cooks, add the shrimp and halved tomatoes to the skillet. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring frequently, until the tomatoes start to soften and the shrimp is nearly cooked through, about 5 minutes.

Reserve 1/2 cup of the pasta-cooking water and drain the spaghetti. Return the pasta and 2 Tbs. of the reserved water to the pot. Add the shrimp mixture and toss over medium heat until the shrimp is cooked through and the spaghetti is perfectly al dente, 1 to 2 minutes more. Add more of the pasta water as necessary to keep the dish moist. Season to taste with salt and pepper, transfer to warm shallow bowls, and top each serving with the breadcrumbs.



Rigatoni with Summer Squash, Spicy Sausage & Goat Cheese

Serves four to six.

Goat cheese brings the flavors of this pasta together while adding its own rich nuance.

- Kosher salt**
- 1 lb. dried rigatoni**
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 3/4 lb. bulk hot Italian sausage (or links, casings removed)**
- 1/3 cup finely chopped shallots (about 3 medium)**
- 2 cups 3/4-inch-diced yellow and green summer squash**
- 3 oz. fresh goat cheese, crumbled (about 3/4 cup)**
- 2 tsp. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 1/4 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (optional)**

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Put the rigatoni in the boiling water and cook until just shy of al dente, about 10 minutes.

While the pasta cooks, heat 1/2 Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the sausage and cook, breaking it into pieces with a spatula or spoon, until it's almost cooked through, 3 to 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer

the sausage to a bowl. Pour the fat out of the skillet but do not wipe it clean. Heat the remaining 2 1/2 Tbs. oil in the skillet over medium heat and cook the shallots until they begin to soften, about 1 minute. Raise the heat to medium high and add the squash. Cook, stirring frequently, until the squash is barely tender, 3 to 5 minutes.

Reserve 1/2 cup of the pasta-cooking water and drain the rigatoni. Return the rigatoni to its cooking pot and add the sausage, the squash mixture, and 2 Tbs. of the reserved pasta water. Toss over medium heat until the sausage is cooked through and the rigatoni is perfectly al dente, about 3 minutes. Add more of the pasta water as necessary to keep the dish moist.

Remove from the heat, add the goat cheese and parsley, and toss until the cheese melts and coats the pasta. Season to taste with salt and pepper, transfer to warm shallow bowls, and top each serving with some of the grated Parmigiano, if using.

Orecchiette with Caramelized Onions, Green Beans, Fresh Corn & Jalapeño

Serves four.

The flavors in this pasta build with each bite. Try it once, and it will become a summertime staple. If you can't find orecchiette, you can use farfalle instead.

Kosher salt
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups thinly sliced sweet onion
(from 1 large onion)
1 lb. dried orecchiette
1/2 lb. fresh green beans, washed, trimmed, and sliced on the diagonal into 1-inch lengths
1 cup fresh corn kernels (from about 2 ears)
1 jalapeño, stemmed, halved lengthwise, seeded, and thinly sliced crosswise
Freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup grated Pecorino Romano
1 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat.

Heat the olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the onion and a large pinch of salt and cook, stirring frequently, until the onion is beginning to soften and brown, about 5 minutes. Lower the heat to medium and continue cooking, stirring frequently, until the onion is very soft and a light golden brown, about 15 more minutes (if the onion begins to look like it's burning, add 2 Tbs. warm water and lower the heat).

Put the orecchiette in the boiling water and cook until just shy of al dente, about 9 minutes. Add the green beans to the pasta water in the last minute of cooking.

While the pasta cooks, add the corn, jalapeño, and a pinch of salt to the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until the corn kernels begin to soften, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Reserve 1/2 cup of the pasta and green bean cooking water and drain the pasta and green beans together in a colander.

Return the orecchiette, green beans, and 2 Tbs. of the reserved

water to the pot. Add the onion mixture and toss over medium heat until the green beans are crisp-tender and the orecchiette is perfectly al dente, 1 to 2 minutes. Add more of the pasta water as necessary to keep the dish moist. Season to taste with salt and pepper, transfer to warm shallow bowls, and top each serving with the pecorino and parsley.

Scott Conant is the chef and owner of L'Impero and Alto restaurants in New York City. ♦



Pasta water: the secret ingredient

To moisten the dish and help the flavors come together, follow these steps:

Reserve about 1/2 cup of the pasta-cooking water. The water contains starches released by the pasta, which will help enrich the overall dish and create a more saucy consistency.

Drain the pasta when it's just shy of al dente. You'll briefly cook the pasta with the rest of the ingredients and the pasta water; if the pasta is slightly underdone when everything is combined, it won't overcook.

Add the reserved pasta water to the pasta and sauce and toss. The starches in the water help the sauce cling to the pasta, which in turn acts like a sponge, absorbing the flavors.



The Art of Making Green Salads

Focus on the greens and don't weigh them down

BY ANNIE WAYTE

New York is a tough place to spend the summer if you're a chef; there's no relief from the triple-digit heat of the kitchen. So it's not a surprise that when the long, hot days are upon us, I want little more than a refreshing green salad for supper. No tomatoes, no cucumbers, no cheese; just beautiful leaves—whether tender butter lettuce or peppery arugula—tossed in a light dressing with only a couple of additions, be it a scattering of fresh herbs or ethereally thin slices of raw vegetables.

Though it's not difficult to make, there is an art to assembling a good green salad. What it requires is a little care in choosing and handling the greens and a lot of restraint with both the dressing and any additional ingredients, so the unique personality of each green can really shine.

Select the freshest greens and handle with care

The key to making beautiful, brightly flavored green salads is to start with the best greens you can find. Buy whole heads of lettuce or loose leafy greens at a grocery store with lots of turnover, or preferably at a farmers' market. Not only is the flavor of these greens better and their texture crisper than that of most bagged lettuce, but you can also see clearly what you're getting.

Greens should feel firm and perky. Avoid buying leaves that are discolored or turning brown on the edges. When choosing a whole head of lettuce, look for tightly packed leaves. At home, remove any leaves that are limp or damaged before washing the rest.

Wash greens well. It's important to wash your greens thoroughly, as even a little grit or sand can ruin a carefully prepared salad. (For how to wash greens, see p. 49.) To me, dirt and sand coming off the leaves is a good sign: It means that those greens came out of the soil without all the handling the prewashed bagged greens see. Just as important as washing is drying the leaves well; otherwise, your dressing won't cling to them.

(continued on p. 48)



"Skip the bagged lettuce," says chef Annie Wayte, who prefers buying whole heads for salad.



Mixed Green Salad with Red-Wine & Dijon Vinaigrette

Serves six to eight.

Consider this a guide to building a mixed green salad and use whichever leaves are available at the grocery store or farmers' market. I love to add fresh herbs and celery leaves for an extra flavor boost.

1 Tbs. red-wine vinegar
¾ tsp. Dijon mustard
¼ tsp. minced garlic
3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 head red or green romaine
(¾ to 1 lb.), trimmed, washed,
dried, and torn into bite-size
pieces (about 5 cups)

**1 cup mâche, trimmed, washed,
and dried (1 to 2 oz.)**

**1 cup oak leaf lettuce, trimmed,
washed, and dried (1 to 2 oz.)**

**1 cup mizuna or baby spinach
leaves, trimmed, washed,
and dried (1 to 2 oz.)**

Leaves from 1 head celery

**½ cup basil leaves (green
or purple), torn into small
pieces**

½ cup chervil sprigs

¼ cup chopped chives

Combine the vinegar with the mustard and garlic in a small bowl and whisk in the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Just before serving, toss the romaine, mâche, oak leaf lettuce, mizuna or spinach, celery leaves, and herbs in a large bowl with just enough of the vinaigrette to lightly coat them (you may not need all of the vinaigrette). Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve.



Rip greens with your hands. When you're ready to assemble your salad, gently rip washed and dried greens by hand into manageable pieces, discarding any thick ribs. Using your hands prevents the leaves from bruising and keeps them fresh and beautiful.

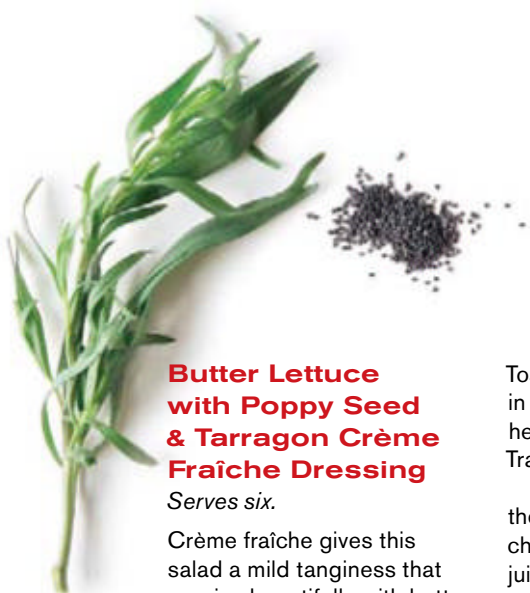
Use a light hand with the dressing and toppings

Where many people go wrong with green salads is in dressing them. A dressing should not dominate the salad. Its role is to marry the ingredients and to enhance and breathe life into the greens, not drown them. So begin with a modest amount of dressing—you can always add more. (See p. 51 for more tips on dressing green salads.)

The flavor of the dressing, too, should not overwhelm. Usually, a ratio of one part acid to three parts oil provides a good balance. But always taste your dressing and adjust it as needed, adding more oil if it's too sharp or more vinegar if it needs punch. For extra flavor, I also add a smidgen of mustard and chopped garlic or shallot.

Even a basic vinaigrette will boost the flavor of your green salads more than most bottled dressings will. But every now and then, I like to play with my vinaigrettes, adding little hits of additional flavor, such as a splash of citrus juice or walnut or hazelnut oil. Sometimes I add a pinch of lemon, orange, or lime zest or some chopped ginger for zing, or a spoonful of puréed melon or apricot for mellow sweetness.

Finally, while I like to keep my green salads green, I find that adding just a few flavorful toppings can give them a bit more personality when I want it. But at the risk of sounding like a broken record, I always use a light touch. If I add any vegetables, for example, I slice them paper thin, so they don't weigh down the greens. Fresh herbs also contribute a bright note without weighing things down, and even toasted nuts, if used judiciously, add just the right amount of crunch to a green salad.



Butter Lettuce with Poppy Seed & Tarragon Crème Fraîche Dressing

Serves six.

Crème fraîche gives this salad a mild tanginess that marries beautifully with butter lettuce's delicate flavor.

1 Tbs. poppy seeds
¼ cup crème fraîche
2 Tbs. plain yogurt
2 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh tarragon plus 2 Tbs. whole tarragon leaves
2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
¼ tsp. minced garlic
Pinch cayenne
Kosher salt
2 or 3 heads butter lettuce (about 12 oz. total), trimmed, washed, dried, and torn by hand into bite-size pieces (about 10 cups)
Freshly ground black pepper

Toast the poppy seeds lightly in a small skillet over medium heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a cool plate.

In a small bowl, combine the crème fraîche, yogurt, chopped tarragon, lemon juice, garlic, and poppy seeds. Stir in 1 or 2 Tbs. water to thin the mixture to a creamy salad-dressing consistency. Season with cayenne and salt to taste.

Just before serving, toss the butter lettuce in a large bowl with just enough of the dressing to lightly coat the leaves. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Arrange the salad on individual serving plates, scatter the whole tarragon leaves on the top, and serve.



Get to know your greens

In summertime, grocery stores and farmers' markets abound with a variety of salad greens, ranging from sweet to spicy to bitter, with textures that can be silky, crunchy, or even bristly. Here are some of my favorites.

Watercress

has a spicy kick and is very versatile. It's often used in sandwiches and soups, but I like to make it the star of a salad. Trim the base of the stalks and keep the bouquet of leaves intact.



Arugula

packs a bold, peppery flavor that's great for salads, soups, and sauces. It mixes well with milder greens, but it's also great by itself. If you find mature arugula too strong, choose baby leaves. Keep the leaves whole, unless they're very large.



Mâche

is also known as lamb's lettuce. It has dainty, velvety-textured leaves with a mild yet tangy flavor. It's usually sold in small rosettes with the root attached. Use it alone or tossed into a mixed green salad.

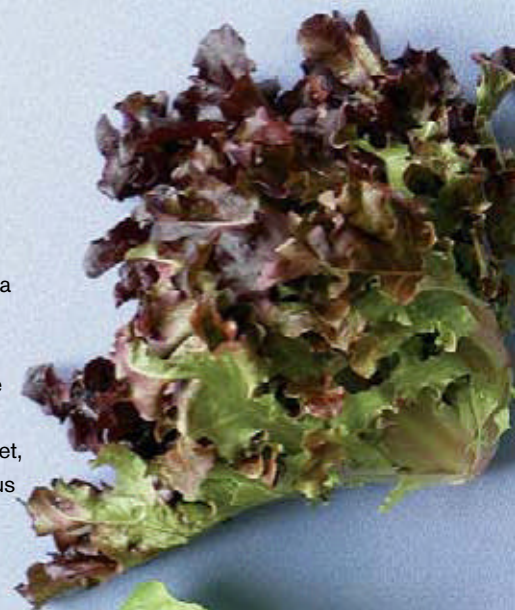
Mizuna

looks pretty and has a mild, earthy flavor, which makes it a great salad green on its own, although it also blends well with other leaves. Keep the leaves whole.



Red & green leaf lettuces

(such as the frilly Lollo Rossa and the smooth Red Oak Leaf) have leaves that grow from a single stalk in a loose bunch rather than forming a tight head. They have a sweet, delicate flavor that's delicious both on its own and mixed with other greens.



How to wash salad greens

To minimize bruising, I like to wash greens in a large bowl of cold water rather than under running water. I gently swirl the leaves in the water to encourage the soil and grit to disperse. Then I lift the leaves out, drain the water in the bowl, and repeat until the leaves are thoroughly clean. Finally, I spin the leaves in small batches in a salad spinner until thoroughly dry. The salad spinner should be only half full. If you overload it, the greens won't dry well. (For another method for washing salad greens, see Food Science, p. 70. For how to store washed greens, see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 64.)

Butter lettuce

(including bibb and Boston) has a subtle, buttery flavor that marries well with citrus and dairy-based vinaigrettes. The silken leaves require very gentle handling.



Romaine

has a sweet, gentle flavor and a crisp bite, and it's versatile: It partners well with most greens and a variety of dressings. For milder flavor and softer texture, remove the outer leaves or buy hearts of romaine.





**Arugula & Fennel
Salad with
Orange & Fennel
Seed Dressing &
Toasted Hazelnuts**

Serves four.

Orange and fennel seeds add a lovely aromatic note to peppery arugula, while thin slices of fennel and chopped hazelnuts provide a nice crunch.

½ tsp. fennel seeds
¼ cup fresh orange juice
1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
1 Tbs. minced shallot
2 tsp. finely grated orange zest
Scant ¼ tsp. minced garlic
¼ tsp. Dijon mustard
1½ Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
1½ Tbs. hazelnut oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 small fennel bulb
5 oz. arugula, trimmed, washed, and dried (about 5 cups)
¼ cup hazelnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped

Toast the fennel seeds lightly in a small skillet over medium heat for about 2 minutes.

Transfer to a cutting board and let the seeds cool. Chop them coarsely.

Combine the orange juice, lemon juice, shallot, orange zest, and garlic in a small bowl. Let sit for 20 minutes and then stir in the fennel seeds and Dijon mustard. Whisk in the olive oil and hazelnut oil and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Cut off the top and bottom of the fennel bulb. Cut it in half lengthwise. Lay one half flat on its cut surface and slice crosswise as thinly as possible. Stop slicing when you hit the core (a little core is all right, but you don't want wide areas of core in your slices). Repeat with the second half. You should have about 1½ cups sliced fennel.

Put the sliced fennel in a large bowl with the arugula and toasted hazelnuts. Toss with enough of the dressing to lightly coat the leaves (you may not need all of the dressing). Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve.





Mâche with Spicy Melon & Pink-Peppercorn Dressing

Serves four.

Puréed melon adds a hint of sweetness to the dressing, while pink peppercorns impart a perfumy note to this pretty salad.

- 1 tsp. pink peppercorns**
- 3 Tbs. unsalted sunflower seeds**
- 1 medium ripe melon (cantaloupe, Crenshaw, Charentais, or Galia), peeled, cut into thirds, and seeded**
- 1 Tbs. white balsamic vinegar; more to taste (see p. 64 for more information)**
- 2 tsp. fresh lime juice; more to taste**
- ¼ tsp. chopped fresh hot chile (such as Serrano, jalapeño, or Thai bird's eye)**
- ¼ tsp. minced garlic**
- 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 tsp. coarsely chopped mint leaves, plus 12 large mint leaves, torn into small pieces**
- Kosher salt**
- 3 oz. mâche, trimmed, washed, and dried (about 3½ cups)**

Toast the pink peppercorns lightly in a small skillet over medium heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Lightly crush them with

a mortar and pestle or on a cutting board with the bottom of another small skillet. Set aside. In the same skillet you used to toast the peppercorns, lightly toast the sunflower seeds over medium heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Coarsely chop approximately one-third of the melon and purée it in a blender until smooth, about 45 seconds. You should have 1 scant cup melon purée. Pour it into a medium bowl and add the vinegar, lime juice, chile, garlic, and half the crushed peppercorns. Slowly whisk in the olive oil. Stir in the chopped mint leaves and salt to taste. If the dressing is too sweet add a little more vinegar or lime juice.

Just before serving, cut the remaining melon lengthwise into 8 long, elegant slices, each about 1 inch thick. In a large bowl, toss the mâche and torn mint leaves with just enough dressing to lightly coat the leaves. Season with salt to taste. Arrange the mâche on serving plates with two slices of melon per plate. Scatter the toasted sunflower seeds and remaining pink peppercorns on the top. Serve the remaining melon dressing on the side.

Five tips for a perfectly dressed salad

Thoroughly dry the leaves before adding the dressing.

Droplets of water will dilute your dressing and prevent it from clinging to the leaves.

Dress your salad just before you serve it. Tossing the greens with the dressing any earlier will cause them to become limp and soggy.

Use just enough dressing to lightly coat the greens.

Pick up and taste a leaf as a test. If it needs a little more moisture, add a few additional drops of dressing. But keep checking the leaves to make sure they don't become too wet.

Toss with your hands. Tossing a salad with clean hands rather

than utensils is easier on the leaves. You can also get a feel for whether the leaves have enough dressing.

Scatter a few toppings on the salad for excitement—just

be sure to use a light hand. Chopped or whole fresh herbs such as basil, mint, parsley, chives, cilantro, chervil, tarragon,

dill, and celery leaves contribute a bright, aromatic note. Thinly sliced raw vegetables like fennel, zucchini, radishes, and mushrooms add flavor and texture. Toasted whole sunflower, poppy, or sesame seeds are good for crunch. And toasted and chopped nuts add both crunch and richness.

Annie Wayte is the chef at New York City's Nicole's and 202. She's also the author of *Keep It Seasonal: Soups, Salads, and Sandwiches*. ♦

Lemon Cheesecake, to Go

Bring these tart and creamy treats to your next picnic—they pack well, and everyone will love them

BY MEG SUZUKI

When I pull these sunny cheesecake squares out of my cooler, whether at a concert in the park or at a lakeside barbecue, they disappear in seconds. My friends just love the contrast of the silky, puckery-tart lemon curd and the sweet (but not too sweet) cheesecake layer below.

Though the recipe for them may look long, they're not at all difficult to make. Summer is, after all, vacation time, and this recipe lets you take a vacation from all the worry that usually accompanies cheesecake making: There's no water bath to set up, no leaking springform pan to worry about, and no adjusting the oven temperature halfway through to avoid cracking. In fact, because the cheesecake gets completely covered with lemon curd, there's no need to worry about cracking at all.

Want more? The graham cracker crust is made with just two ingredients and requires no blind baking. The custard for the cheesecake comes together in the food processor in less than a minute, and no eggs need to be separated. Once chilled, the cheesecake easily cuts

into 16 even pieces, which makes serving them a breeze. We've even included a handy tip on packing them (see the box at right).

Cooking the lemon curd does require an extra step, but you can—and should—do it while the cheesecake bakes. You'll love the silken texture it adds as you bite through it to the creamy cheesecake layer below. Consisting of just four ingredients, the lemon curd is bright, acidic, and tastes only of fresh lemons.

Picnic tips

These lemon cheesecake squares are a perfect addition to a picnic menu. To make packing and serving easier, flatten a paper muffin liner, set a cheesecake square in the center, and fold the sides up. Repeat for the remaining squares, and then pack them in a box or a plastic container. The cheesecake squares need to be kept cool, so remember to include freezer packs in your picnic basket.



Lemon Cheesecake Squares

Yields sixteen 2-inch squares.

These squares need to set up in the refrigerator, so allow at least 5 hours of chilling time before you serve (or pack) them. You can substitute lower-fat cream cheese for regular, if you like. The cheesecake itself will be slightly less creamy but still fabulous.

9 graham crackers (about 5 oz.)
2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter, melted
1 lb. cream cheese or Neufchâtel (⅓-less-fat cream cheese), at room temperature and cut into approximately 1-inch pieces
¾ cup granulated sugar
3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice (from 1 or 2 lemons)
1 Tbs. finely grated lemon zest (from 1 or 2 lemons, preferably using a rasp-style grater)
2 large eggs
1 recipe Lemon Curd (at right), warm or at room temperature

For the crust: Cut two 8x16-inch pieces of parchment. Put the strips in an 8x8 baking pan (preferably straight-sided) so that they cross each other and the excess hangs over the pan's sides. Push the parchment into the bottom and corners of the pan.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F.

Break the graham crackers into a food processor and process until finely ground. Add the melted butter and pulse until the mixture resembles damp sand. Transfer the crumbs to the lined pan and press them firmly and evenly into the pan. Set aside.

For the cheesecake: Rinse, dry, and reassemble the food processor. In the cleaned bowl, combine the cream cheese, sugar, lemon juice, and lemon zest. Process until smooth, about 30 seconds, stopping halfway to scrape the sides of the bowl. Add the eggs and process until the mixture is perfectly smooth and blended, stopping to scrape the sides of the bowl as necessary, about another 20 seconds.

Pour the cheesecake mixture into the prepared pan. Bake until the sides are slightly puffed and the center is dry to the touch, about 40 minutes.

To finish: When the cheesecake comes out of the oven, pour all of the curd onto the cheesecake and use an offset spatula to spread it evenly. Let cool to room temperature and refrigerate for at least 5 hours, preferably overnight. You can refrigerate it uncovered, as no detectable skin forms on the curd.

When the cheesecake is thoroughly chilled, carefully lift it out of the pan using the parchment "handles" and onto a cutting board. Slide the parchment out and discard it. Using a large, sharp knife, cut the cheesecake into quarters, and then cut each quarter into four equal squares. To make clean cuts, wipe the knife blade with a damp paper towel between each slice.



The lemon curd is cooked properly when it begins to steam and has thickened considerably.

Lemon Curd

Yields enough to cover the cheesecake, about 1 cup.

Make the lemon curd while the cheesecake bakes; it pours and spreads best while still warm. When cooking the curd, don't let it come to a boil, or the eggs will overcook.

½ cup fresh lemon juice (from 2 or 3 lemons)
½ cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter, cut into pieces

Set a fine strainer over a medium bowl. In another medium bowl, whisk the lemon juice, sugar, and eggs until thoroughly combined and most of the sugar has dissolved.

Pour the lemon mixture into a small, nonreactive saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon or heatproof spatula, until the curd is steaming (but not boiling) and thickened and registers about 175°F on an instant-read thermometer, 3 to 7 minutes.

Take the curd off the heat, add the butter, and stir until the butter has melted. Pour the curd through the strainer to get rid of any lumps. Set aside but use to top the cheesecake while still warm.

Meg Suzuki is a cooking instructor and writer based in San Jose, California. ♦

A Kitchen That Goes All Out

An outdoor kitchen in Vermont keeps everything within arm's reach—and the elements out

BY LISA WADDLE

Outdoor kitchens may be popular in California and Florida, but you don't have to live in a sunny climate to enjoy cooking in your back yard. Just take a look at Deborah Krasner's outdoor kitchen in Vermont, a state more known for snowfall than cookouts.

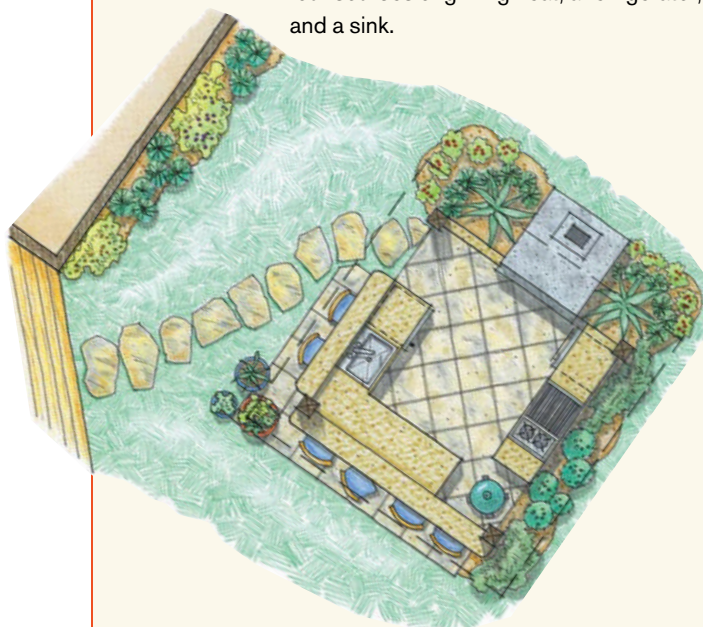
Krasner, author of *The New Outdoor Kitchen*, just published by The Taunton Press, was inspired to start building out back after finding herself wheeling the Weber kettle grill onto her snow-covered patio every January to indulge her love of grilling.

Naturally, in designing her all-weather kitchen, Krasner started with the idea of a covered space. Her kitchen's cedar-shake roof provides shelter from the elements, and a louvered, copper-roofed cupola acts as a vent for smoke and grease.

Although a second, exterior kitchen might seem a luxury, Krasner's compact design demonstrates that you don't need a lot of space to feed your craving for food cooked al fresco. At only 10 feet by 10 feet, Krasner's kitchen is compact yet complete enough to include four sources of grilling heat—a wood-fired masonry oven, a gas grill

Bird's-eye view

Located conveniently close to the house, Deborah Krasner's 10x10-foot outdoor kitchen (shown without roof) is small but has everything she needs, including four sources of grilling heat, a refrigerator, and a sink.





Cooking alfresco. Deborah Krasner extends the outdoor cooking season in Vermont with her all-weather kitchen. Patio dining as well as counter seating make entertaining a crowd easy.

Inspired?

Next steps to take

To get started planning your own outdoor kitchen, Deborah Krasner suggests:

Start an idea file. Clip magazine and catalog photos of layouts, equipment, lighting, and outdoor furniture. Collect manufacturer brochures of equipment you're considering, price lists, and names of landscape designers and contractors.

Create a budget. How long you plan to stay at your current location will determine whether you spend the bulk of your money in the setting (patio, water lines) or equipment (which can move with you).

Audition a spot. Use a portable grill, table, and chairs to create a temporary outdoor space. Figure out where guests will sit so the grill doesn't smoke them out and experience how close your site is to neighbors' lights or noise.

Design a layout. Photograph your outdoor space at different hours of the day to see sun and shade patterns. Then draw a site map and sketch in appliances, utilities, storage, and seating.

Consider building in stages.

Budget constraints might make building over several years a good option. Year one could involve burying electrical, natural gas, and/or water lines and laying stone or decking, while you use a portable grill. Year two could feature installation of a sink and counters. Year three could involve upgrading equipment and constructing a roof or adding landscaping.



with two side burners, an electric smoker, and a charcoal smoker.

"Part of our motivation for building an outdoor kitchen was that we've become more ambitious in our cooking over time and wanted to explore more outdoor cooking methods," Krasner says. "Our initial design requirements were a place for a permanent masonry oven, a roof overhead, and a location not far from the house."

Thanks to the availability of all-weather equipment and smart design, Krasner packed much more than that into her out-

side space. Among her favorite features are a large apron-front sink ("for washing vegetables straight from the garden or rinsing big birds for the wood-fired oven") and an eating bar with stools ringing the outside of the kitchen to accommodate guests.

Of course, building outside, especially in a back yard that experiences all four seasons, means special consideration in selecting materials. Krasner chose soapstone counters and stainless-steel cabinets because they can withstand the forces of nature and are easy to maintain. The kitchen's floor is made

of concrete paving stones, which look natural and don't hold heat in the summer.

Taking the time to make your outdoor kitchen as efficient, comfortable, and complete as possible will entice you outside to cook and entertain more often, Krasner says.

"It has changed our outdoor life as well as what we cook and eat," she adds. "We grill or smoke on the coldest of winter days, thanks to the roof."

Six details that make this kitchen work

Small in scope, Deborah Krasner's outdoor kitchen is packed with efficient design details.

1 An outdoor masonry oven was the impetus for building the outdoor kitchen, so it naturally became the focal point for the design.

2 Side burners on the gas grill are great for finishing sauces, boiling water for corn on the cob or lobsters, or even just heating up a kettle for tea when grilling in colder weather.

3 A cool zone away from the stove is vital so that there is counter space for food before and after cooking.

4 An undercounter refrigerator may seem a luxury until you keep running back inside for sauces, condiments, and vegetables. This one has to be disconnected in the winter, as does the sink.

5 Storage space for glasses, dishes, and table linens saves trips back to the house. Besides open shelves, Krasner included closed, all-weather drawers and cabinets for year-round storage.

6 More than one entrance. The one thing Krasner would change if she were doing this again would be to build another entrance to the kitchen. She says people are constantly coming in to poke at what's on the grill or grab themselves a soda. With only one entrance, there's often a bottleneck, and guests get trapped inside.



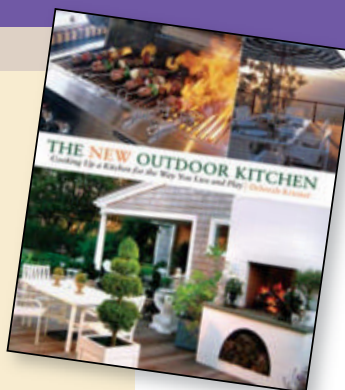
Looking back toward the patio dining space from inside the kitchen, above, shows the proximity of the outdoor cooking space to the main house.

Weather-resistant stainless-steel drawers, right, are large enough to hold serving bowls and table linens, so there's no need for overhead storage cabinets that would block the view.



For more ideas

The New Outdoor Kitchen: Cooking Up a Kitchen for the Way You Live and Play by Deborah Krasner showcases more than a dozen outdoor kitchens that vary in size, price, ambition, and creativity. You can order it from The Taunton Press at www.taunton.com.



Lisa Waddle is an associate editor at Fine Cooking. ♦

Chinese Chicken Salad

The best version of this popular salad has lots of crunchy texture and a boldly flavored dressing

BY BARBARA LAUTERBACH

In all my travels through Asia, I never came across anything quite like the Chinese chicken salad I see in casual restaurants all over the United States. Built from layers of shredded chicken, chopped cabbage, Asian vegetables, crunchy toppings, and tangy ginger-chile dressing, this main-dish salad was probably born on the West Coast in the 1980s. No matter where it came from, there's no doubt it's taken on a life of its own.

Forget the canned mandarin oranges and keep the crunchy toppings. Now that so many restaurants seem to have their own interpretations of this popular salad on the menu, it's no surprise that there are some pretty mediocre versions. In fact, quite a few cookbooks have fallen prey to this trend. If you see the words "mandarin oranges" (think mushy) or "chow mein noodles" (think dry), run. Instead, think crisp (napa cabbage and snow peas) and crunchy (toasted almonds, baked wonton strips, and sesame seeds). My recipe takes advantage of these textures (see the photos at right) to create a main-dish salad that's both refreshing and satisfying.

A great Chinese chicken salad needs a bold dressing; don't be tempted to substitute something from a bottle. My bright dressing gets its sweet and hot flavors from two types of Asian chile sauces, tamari (or soy sauce), garlic, and fresh ginger. These are balanced by the cool acidity of rice vinegar. It might be tempting to skip using one or two of these ingredients, but I think you'll be disappointed. A vibrant dressing makes the kind of salad that has everyone asking for more (and asking for the recipe).

Chinese Chicken Salad

Serves four as a main course.

Most supermarkets carry sweet and hot chile sauces, but if you have trouble finding them, try an Asian market.

FOR THE SALAD:

2 bone-in, skin-on split chicken breasts (about 2¼ lb.)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

8 square wonton wrappers

Vegetable oil cooking spray

⅔ cup sliced almonds

2 oz. snow peas, trimmed and cut on the diagonal into thirds (½ cup)

1 Tbs. white sesame seeds

½ small head napa cabbage, trimmed and cut crosswise into ½-inch-wide strips (3 to 3½ cups)

½ romaine heart, cut crosswise into ½-inch-wide strips (1½ to 2 cups)

3 large scallions (white and green parts), thinly sliced on the diagonal (½ cup)

FOR THE DRESSING:

¼ cup rice vinegar

1½ Tbs. tamari or soy sauce

1 Tbs. sweet Asian chile sauce

2 medium cloves garlic, finely chopped (2 tsp.)

2 tsp. minced fresh ginger

½ tsp. kosher salt

½ tsp. hot Asian chile sauce

¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup peanut oil

1 Tbs. Asian sesame oil

Prepare the salad ingredients: Heat the oven to 425°F. Season the chicken breasts with salt and pepper. Roast on a rack set in a rimmed baking sheet or roasting pan until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of a breast registers 165°F, 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool. Remove and discard the

skin and then shred the meat. Reduce the oven temperature to 375°F.

Stack the wonton wrappers on a cutting board and cut them into ½-inch-wide strips. Line a baking sheet with foil and spray lightly with cooking spray. Separate the strips, lay them on the baking sheet, and mist them lightly with the cooking spray. Sprinkle lightly with salt. Scrunch each strip to give it a wavy shape, if you like. Bake at 375°F until golden, 7 to 9 minutes. Reduce the oven heat to 350°F.

Spread the sliced almonds on a baking sheet and toast in the oven until golden, 6 to 8 minutes.

Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to a boil. Have a bowl of ice water ready. Boil the snow peas just until bright green but still crisp, about 20 seconds. Drain and transfer to the ice water to stop the cooking. Drain.

Put the sesame seeds in a dry skillet and shake or stir over medium heat until light golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove them from the hot pan to prevent overcooking.

Make the dressing and assemble the salad: In a medium bowl, combine the vinegar, tamari, sweet chile sauce, garlic, ginger, salt, hot chile sauce, and pepper. Gradually whisk in the peanut and sesame oils.

In a large bowl, toss the cabbage, romaine, and snow peas. In another bowl, toss the chicken and scallions with ¼ cup of the dressing. Add the chicken to the greens, and then add the sesame seeds and almonds. Toss with enough of the remaining dressing to coat well. Garnish each serving with the baked wonton strips.

Barbara Lauterbach is a cooking instructor and cookbook author. ♦



Three ways to add crunch



Blanch the snow peas to set their color and retain their crispness.



Cut the napa cabbage and romaine crosswise for juicy strips.



Bake—don't fry—the wonton wrapper strips and scrunch them for maximum crunch and eye appeal.

How to Make a Memorable

For this summertime favorite, all you need is a simple method and your choice of ripe fruit

BY ABIGAIL JOHNSON DODGE

As a cookbook author, I spend my days crafting recipes with precise equations of ingredients, measurements, and times. But when I'm off the clock, I can relax and take a more freewheeling approach to my baking. In summer, that means cobbler. This deep-dish fruit dessert, topped with a buttery biscuit crust, is endlessly versatile. And once you get the hang of making one—I'll walk you through the five basic steps on the next two pages—it's easy to whip one up with whatever fruit, spices, and flavorings you happen to crave at the moment.

Because cobblers are so much about the fruit, starting with the ripest, most fragrant fruit possible is key. That's where the flexibility of this method is such a plus. Even if I set out with a blueberry cobbler in mind, I can change course if I find peaches that are outstanding. I'm also a fan of combining summer fruits, so if there aren't enough ripe, sweet plums or nectarines, I can round out my filling with up to three kinds of fruit. To help the fruits bake evenly, I generally leave berries whole, with

the exception of strawberries, which I halve, or quarter if they're large. I slice peaches, nectarines, and plums into 1-inch-thick wedges. Because not every fruit (nor every eater) requires the same level of sweetness, I'm always ready to adjust the amount of sugar in the filling or topping accordingly.

Cobbler dough is much more laid back than pie or tart dough. There's no chilling, rolling, or anxiety required. I use a food processor to cut the butter into the dry ingredients and then mix in the sour cream by hand until the dough clumps together. I then divide the dough by hand and drop the pieces onto the fruit filling to bake; the resulting biscuits' texture is appealingly rustic, with lots of crunchy peaks.

Cobblers are something I usually make on the spur of the moment, but when I do have the luxury of time and can plan ahead, I'll prepare the topping and the fruit (rinsed, drained, and cut but not tossed with the other ingredients) up to 8 hours ahead and pop them in the fridge until it's time to assemble and bake the dessert.



Raspberry-peach cobbler
with cornmeal biscuits



Favorite combinations

Because there are so many different ways to mix and match fillings and toppings, I rarely repeat a cobbler all summer. Here are a few combinations that are real winners.

Plum cobbler with almonds, lemon zest & ginger

Dough flavored with almonds and lemon zest; plum filling flavored with nutmeg and ginger; turbinado sugar sprinkled on top.

Triple berry cobbler

with pecans & cinnamon

Dough flavored with pecans and cinnamon; blueberry, strawberry, and raspberry filling flavored with vanilla extract and ginger; no sugar on top.

Raspberry-peach cobbler with cornmeal biscuits

Dough flavored with cornmeal; raspberry and peach filling flavored with lemon zest; granulated sugar sprinkled on top.

Five easy steps to a delicious fruit cobbler

Yields one 9x13-inch cobbler; serves eight to ten.

1 Get ready

Read the method from start to finish and gather your ingredients before you begin baking. Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Have ready a 9x13-inch Pyrex dish or similar.

What you'll need:

One recipe Sour Cream Cobbler Dough (at right)

8 cups fruit, prepared as directed in Step 3

½ to ¾ cup granulated sugar

1 to 2 Tbs. all-purpose flour, for tossing

Pinch table salt

1 or 2 filling flavorings

1½ Tbs. granulated, turbinado, or demerara sugar (optional)



2 Make the dough

Sour Cream Cobbler Dough

Yields enough topping for one cobbler.

7½ oz. (1⅔ cups) all-purpose flour

⅓ cup granulated sugar or packed light brown sugar

1 Tbs. baking powder

¼ tsp. table salt

3 oz. (6 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut into 10 pieces

Up to two dough flavorings (optional)

¾ cup sour cream, chilled

In a food processor, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Pulse briefly to blend the ingredients, about 10 seconds. Add the butter pieces and pulse until they are the size of small peas, 5 to 7 one-second pulses.

Dump the mixture into a large mixing bowl. Add any dough flavorings (see the box below right), if using, and stir until evenly dispersed. Add the sour cream. Using a rubber spatula, gently smear the ingredients together until the flour is evenly moistened and the dough begins to form large, soft, moist clumps. Bring the dough together into an 8-inch-long log. Divide the log into 10 roughly equal round pieces. Refrigerate the pieces in the bowl while preparing the fruit.



Dough flavorings

Choose 1 or 2 (optional)

Finely grated lemon zest: ½ tsp.

Finely grated orange zest: ¾ tsp.

Finely ground cornmeal: ¼ cup (1¼ oz.)

Ground cinnamon: ¾ tsp.

Toasted almonds, pecans, walnuts, pistachios, or hazelnuts: ½ cup, chopped

do ahead:

You can prepare the dough up to 8 hours ahead; simply cover the bowl with plastic wrap and store it in the refrigerator until you're ready to proceed with the recipe.

3 Prepare the fruit filling

Put the fruit in a large bowl. Toss with $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar (use less for very ripe, sweet fruit and more for fruit that's not perfectly ripe and sweet), 1 Tbs. all-purpose flour (if your cobbler has

any berries in it, use 2 Tbs. flour), and a pinch of table salt.

If you want to add optional filling flavorings, choose 1 or 2 from the list in the box below and gently toss them into the fruit now, making sure to mix them in evenly.

Fruit

Choose up to 3, for a total of 8 cups. All fruit should be ripe, well rinsed, and drained.

Apricots: cut into 1-inch-thick wedges

Blackberries

Blueberries

Peaches or nectarines:
cut into 1-inch-thick wedges

Plums or pluots: cut into 1-inch-thick wedges

Raspberries

Strawberries, hulled:
if small, leave whole;
if medium, cut in half;
if large, cut in quarters

Filling flavorings

Choose 1 or 2 (optional)

Finely grated lemon zest: $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.

Finely grated orange zest: 1 tsp.

Ground cinnamon: $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.

Ground nutmeg: $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.

Minced fresh ginger:
2 tsp.

Pure almond extract:
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.

Pure vanilla extract: 1 tsp.

4 Assemble the cobbler

Pile the fruit into the baking dish, scraping in any remaining juices or sugar from the bowl, and spread evenly. Remove the pieces of dough from the refrigerator and arrange them randomly on top of the filling, leaving spaces between the pieces. Don't be tempted to flatten the dough—the large pieces are important for proper and even baking of the filling and topping. If desired, sprinkle

a little sugar evenly over the cobbler (see the list below).

Sugar sprinkle

Choose 1 and use $1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbs. (optional)

Demerara sugar

Granulated sugar

Turbinado sugar



5 Bake the cobbler

Bake until the filling is bubbling and the topping is browned, 50 to 60 minutes. Let sit about 20 minutes to allow the juices to settle. You can serve this cobbler hot or warm (it will stay warm at room temperature for 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours). Serve with lightly sweetened whipped cream or vanilla ice cream, if you like.



Abigail Johnson Dodge, author of The Weekend Baker, is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking. ♦

Look & listen for the ripest

At first glance, that mound of melons at the market all look the same. But we all know they don't taste the same. To find a ripe one:

Lift it. A melon should feel heavy for its size; compare a few.

Look at it. It's mainly what you *don't* see that counts: No blemishes, bruises, soft spots, wrinkles, or bumps.

Smell it.

A fragrant aroma, especially near the stem end, is a good sign.

Thump it. Hold the melon to your ear and give it a few knocks. It should sound more cavernous and hollow than muffled.



The skin beneath the raised netting on a cantaloupe should be golden, not green.

A paler shade of balsamic

Though it lacks the long Italian pedigree of traditional balsamic, white balsamic vinegar is worth keeping in the pantry as a sweeter alternative to white wine or champagne vinegar. Fruity and floral in flavor, it has the sweet-and-sour balance of regular balsamic without the dark color or caramel undertones.

The methods used to make white balsamic vary from one producer to the next. The most straightforward production methods include bleaching regular balsamic vinegar and sweetening white wine vinegar with grape must (pressed grapes), preferably of the Trebbiano variety used to make regular balsamic.

Despite their ambiguous origins, the handful of white balsamics we tasted were equally delightful. They're best used as a condiment or in light vinaigrettes. Add a splash to sautéed fennel, carrots, or parsnips. Or try the recipe for mâche with melon and pink peppercorn dressing on p. 51 and the prosciutto-wrapped cantaloupe, below.

—Allison Ehri, test kitchen associate



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BY JENNIFER ARMENTROUT



Prosciutto-Wrapped Melon with Mint & White Balsamic Vinegar

Serves eight as an appetizer.

This riff on a classic Italian hors d'oeuvre is a great way to start a summer gathering. You can assemble it up to two hours ahead, if you like, but the mint will darken a bit.

- 1 ripe cantaloupe**
- 2 Tbs. very thinly sliced fresh mint leaves**
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 to 3 tsp. white balsamic vinegar**
- 6 oz. very thinly sliced prosciutto, preferably imported**

With a sharp knife, trim the peel from the melon. Cut it in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. Slice one of the halves lengthwise into slender wedges, and then cut the wedges in half crosswise. (Wrap and save the other melon half for another use.)

Put the melon wedges in a medium bowl and toss them with the mint, pepper, and vinegar to taste—the sweeter the melon, the more vinegar you can use. Tear the prosciutto lengthwise into 1- to 2-inch-wide strips and wrap a strip or two around each piece of melon. Arrange the wrapped melon on a serving platter. If making ahead, cover with plastic and refrigerate until ready to serve.



Fish steaks vs. fillets

When you're at the fish counter, not only do you have to choose what kind of fish you want, but sometimes you also have to decide whether you want it cut as a fillet or a steak.

A fish fillet (bottom) is one whole, boneless side of a fish. It may be skin-on or skinless. Fillets from large fish like salmon are frequently cut into individual portions, which are also called fillets.

A fish steak (top) usually refers to a cross-cut portion of a large fish like salmon or halibut. It comes bone-in and skin-on. It can be confusing, but fillets from big, meaty fish like tuna and swordfish are often referred to

as steaks as well, even though they're technically fillets.

For most cooking, fillets and steaks are essentially interchangeable, and the choice between the two usually comes down to aesthetics and whether or not you feel like dealing with fish bones. On the grill, however, steaks behave better than fillets because the skin and bones help hold the fish together. (And though they're really fillets, meaty fish "steaks" grill well because they're firm to begin with.) For instructions on how to grill fish steaks and accompaniments to serve with them, see "Delicious Finishes for Grilled Fish" on p. 40.

knife skills

How to turn a salmon steak into a medallion

Salmon on the grill can be a little tricky because it likes to stick to the grill grates, even grates that are perfectly cleaned and oiled (see p. 69). A salmon steak is less likely than a fillet to stick, but with all the bones, it's not as neat and easy to eat as a fillet.

A salmon medallion, which is a salmon steak that's been boned and tied into a tidy little round, gives you the best of both worlds. Some fish counters sell the medallions ready to go, but if all you can find is a salmon steak, here's how to turn it into a medallion.



1 Trim the lining and bones from the belly flaps and divide the steak in half along the backbone. Discard the backbone and belly trimmings.



2 Run a fingertip over the salmon flesh on both sides to feel for pin bones; use needlenose pliers or fish tweezers to remove them. Reverse the direction of one side and nestle the two sides together, yin-yang style.



3 Make an incision between the skin and flesh of the thicker end of each salmon piece (shown at knife point above), and then trim just enough skin off the belly flaps (shown at bottom of photo) that the flaps can wrap around and tuck in under the skin of the thicker ends (shown at center left). Tie a piece of butcher's twine around the medallion to hold it together.



Gravlax



Cold-smoked



Hot-smoked

Cured & smoked **salmon**

Before modern transportation and refrigeration, salmon was dried and smoked—often to a crisp—to preserve it. These days, salmon is still cured and smoked, but the goal is enhanced flavor and texture, not preservation. Different methods produce different results, all of them delicious (and all of them needing refrigeration). Here's a description of what's most widely available, plus a recipe for our favorite—gravlax.

Gravlax is salmon fillet that's been cured in a mixture of salt and sugar with herbs, spices, citrus, and alcohol (see the recipe below). In addition to adding flavor, the cure draws moisture from the salmon. Moisture allows bacteria to grow, so reducing the moisture preserves the salmon; the drier it is, the longer it will last. Without the need for preservation, today's gravlax is fairly moist, and because it's not cooked, it has a lovely silky texture and delicate flavor. Thinly sliced gravlax is delicious served on buttered toasts and topped with a little crème fraîche and chives. Avoid using it in cooked dishes where heat might destroy its texture.

Cold-smoked salmon begins with a salt cure, usually a flavored brine. The cured salmon is then air-dried in a cool place until the surface develops a shiny layer, called the pellicle, which helps the smoke penetrate. Next, the salmon is put in a special smoker, which keeps the heat low enough that the fish doesn't cook as it's flavored by the smoke. The smoking time ranges from a few hours to a few days, depending on the desired flavor and the smoker. Like gravlax, cold-smoked salmon should not be heated. Its smoky flavor is great with capers, red onion, caviar, and boiled eggs. Try the egg salad with smoked salmon recipe on p. 78a.

Hot-smoked salmon may be cured and air-dried like cold-smoked salmon, or it may not be cured at all. But the real difference is that hot-smoked salmon slowly cooks in the smoker, giving it a texture and appearance similar to that of regular cooked salmon. Delicious hot or cold, it makes a wonderful addition to scrambled eggs, pastas, and potato dishes.

—Allison Ebbri



Gravlax

Serves eight to twelve as an appetizer.

Discover how satisfying and easy it is to make gravlax, and you'll want to do it again and again. This rendition is flavored with the traditional lemon and dill, but you can get as inventive as you want with the flavorings so long as you keep the salt amount the same. You can even use more sugar, if you like.

1 to 1½ lb. skin-on salmon fillet, preferably center-cut and very fresh
4 tsp. fresh lemon juice
2 tsp. vodka (optional)
½ cup kosher salt
¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh dill

3 Tbs. granulated sugar
2 tsp. freshly cracked black pepper

Set a small perforated pan, a flat-bottomed colander or strainer basket, or even a cooling rack or a broiler pan in a baking dish or similar container to catch drippings. Line the perforated pan with a large piece of cheesecloth, allowing the edges to drape over the sides of the pan.

Remove the pin bones from the salmon and put it skin side down in the center of the cheesecloth. Brush the lemon juice and vodka (if using) evenly over the salmon. In a small bowl, mix the salt, dill, sugar, and pepper. Pack this cure mix-

ture on top of the salmon in a thick, even layer. Wrap the edges of the cheesecloth around the salmon to loosely bundle it up.

Choose another pan that's roughly the same size as the salmon—a loaf pan, for example—and put it on top of the salmon. Add about 2 lb. of weight to the pan—two 15-oz. food cans work well—to press the salmon and help it exude moisture. Refrigerate for 3 days. Gently brush off and discard the cure.

To serve, slice very thinly at a sharp angle to make wide slices. Well-wrapped gravlax will keep in the refrigerator for about 5 days.

The best way to store salad greens

The way in which you store delicate salad greens makes a big difference in how long they stay fresh. We've kept greens fresh for as long as two weeks using this method from food scientist Shirley Corriher.

Discard any leaves that have brown spots. Soak the greens in very cold water for 15 to 30 minutes to replenish water lost since harvesting, and then spin them dry. Wrap them loosely in dry paper towels, and put them in a zip-top plastic bag. The towels absorb excess moisture, so the greens stay moist enough that they don't wilt but not so moist that they get soggy and rot.

Partially seal the bag, gently squeeze out as much air as possible without crushing the greens, and then finish sealing the bag. This step limits the greens' exposure to air and slows down their breathing—that's right, they breathe—which in turn slows deterioration. Store the greens in your refrigerator's produce bin.



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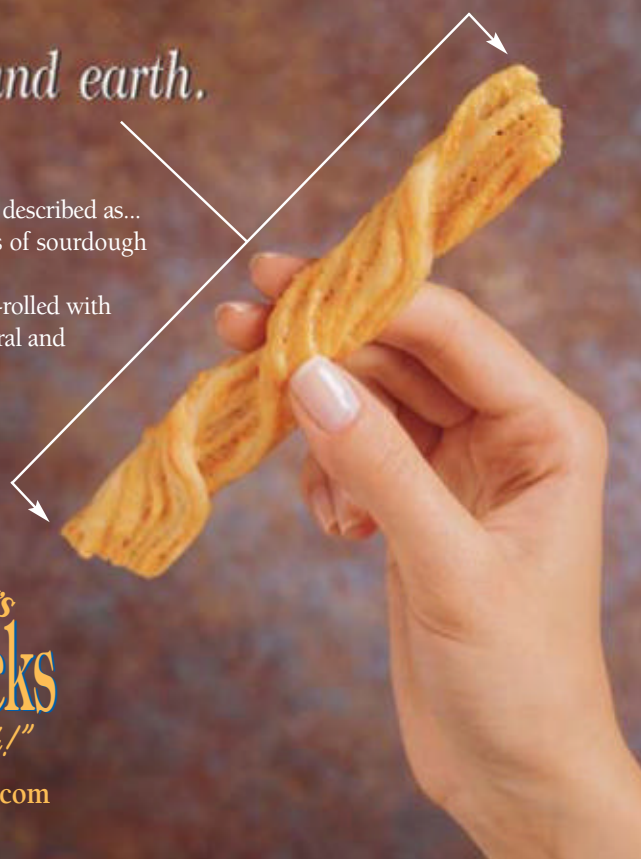
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leftovers

After the cookout

In case your guests leave you with leftovers from our “Grilling for a Crowd” pullout on p. 26a, we have some ideas for using them up.

Leftover Thyme & Roasted Red Pepper Butter

Toss grilled shrimp with leftover Thyme & Roasted Red Pepper Butter and a squeeze of fresh lime juice.

Leftover Buttermilk Herb Dip

Use leftover Buttermilk Herb Dip as a spread for sandwiches or as salad dressing.

Leftover Grilled Herb-Crusted Leg of Lamb and Chopped Tomato & Cucumber Salad

Stuff a pita with leftover lamb and tomato-cucumber salad.

Leftover Argentine Spice-Rubbed Flank Steak

See the recipe below to make steak for breakfast, shown in the photo at right.

Steak & Eggs Rancheros

Serves two.

This beefed-up version of the Mexican breakfast dish huevos rancheros (ranch-style eggs) is great for lunch or dinner, too.

1 tiny clove garlic

Kosher salt

1 small tomato, cut into small dice

½ avocado, cut into small dice

¼ cup leftover Salsa Criolla (recipe, p. 26a), drained

¼ jalapeño, minced

2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro

Freshly ground pepper

1 Tbs. vegetable oil

Two 6-inch corn tortillas

2 large eggs

4 to 5 oz. sliced Argentine Spice-Rubbed Flank Steak (recipe, p. 26a; about four ½-inch-thick slices), warmed in the microwave or in a skillet

¼ cup crumbled feta

Peel and chop the garlic. Sprinkle the garlic with a generous pinch of kosher salt and mash it into a paste with the side of a



chef's knife. In a small bowl, combine the garlic with the tomato, avocado, leftover salsa, jalapeño, and 1 Tbs. of the cilantro. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Have two dinner plates and a stack of paper towels ready. Heat the oil in a 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Using tongs, fry the tortillas one at a time until just golden and slightly crisp, about 30 seconds per side, and transfer to the paper towels. Reduce the heat to medium low and let the skillet cool down a bit. Meanwhile, blot the excess oil from the tortillas with the paper towels. Sprinkle each tortilla with a pinch of salt. Put one tortilla on each plate.

Crack the eggs into the skillet. Season with salt and pepper, cover, and cook until the yolks' edges have just begun to set, 2 to 3 minutes. (The eggs should cook gently, so lower the heat if needed.)

While the eggs are cooking, divide half the salsa between the tortillas. Divide the steak between the tortillas and top with the remaining salsa. Separate the eggs with the edge of a spatula, if needed. Slide one egg onto each tortilla. Sprinkle with the remaining 1 Tbs. cilantro and the feta. Serve immediately.

—Allison Ebri



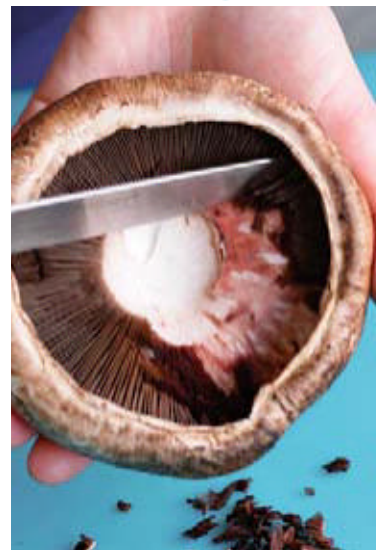
A clean grill means less sticking

It's always a good idea to start with thoroughly cleaned and oiled grill grates. That way, there's no flavor transfer from the last thing you grilled, and foods are less likely to stick to the grates.

To clean the grates, heat them first to soften the stuck-on gunk and then scrub them with a stiff wire grill brush. Next, fold a paper towel into a little pad, grasp it with long-handled tongs, and dip it in some cooking oil. Quickly swab the grates with the towel, cleaning and oiling them at the same time. Repeat this step until the grates seem clean, and then cover the grill briefly to let it heat up again. If you're grilling something that tends to stick, like fish, give the grates another swipe of oil just before the food goes on.

Remove bitter portabella gills before cooking

A big, meaty grilled portabella mushroom makes a perfect topping for a hamburger because its size and shape are so burger-like, but it's also hearty enough to stand in for the burger itself, as in the Grilled Portabella Sandwiches with Tomatoes, Mozzarella & Basil recipe on p. 78a. Whether you plan to grill a portabella or cook it any other way, there's an important but often overlooked prep step you should take: Remove the gills on the underside of the cap. They have a bitter taste, and they exude an unattractive black liquid when they're cooked. To get rid of them, just scrape them off with a table knife or the side of a spoon. ♦



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A simple guide to Handling fruits and vegetables safely

Sometimes bad things come from good food, but there are easy ways to minimize your risk

BY LINDA J. HARRIS

For a long time, if we worried at all about getting sick from food, we focused on things like undercooked hamburger or tainted oysters. Today, in light of recent outbreaks of illness from contaminated spinach and scallions, it's hard not to think about fresh produce, too. But there's no need to swear off fresh fruits and vegetables. For one thing, the chances of getting sick are very small—contaminated produce is the exception, not the rule. And second, you can reduce your risk by following a few guidelines when you're buying and washing your fresh fruits and vegetables.

The pathogens that are often responsible for illness linked to fresh produce are the *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157:H7 bacteria, which are the same pathogens we associate with meat and poultry. Fruit and vegetables can become contaminated at many points in the food chain, from the open fields where they're grown through distribution and retail stores all the way through to preparation in your kitchen. When the contamination occurs in the kitchen, it's usually due to contact with raw meat or poultry. (So let me emphasize that the old food safety rules still apply—designate separate cutting boards for raw meat and fresh vegetables, wash hands and surfaces thoroughly after working with raw meat and before working with fruits and vegetables.)

Identifying the sources of contamination that occur in the field has been very difficult, but irrigation water, improperly composted manure, and workers (from

poor hygiene) are all considered possible origins. Some of the problems surrounding this issue are that produce is grown outdoors; the pathogens survive pretty well in water, manure, and soil; and really small numbers are capable of making you sick.

You may not have the power to prevent contamination from occurring in the field, but in your kitchen, there's one certain way to ensure the safety of your fruit and vegetables, and that's simply to cook them. As long as the temperature hits 160°F, pathogens will be killed. But we don't always want to cook these foods, especially at this time of year, so here's what you need to know to minimize your risks.

Shopping with safety in mind

When you're choosing fruits and vegetables at the store, you're probably thinking more about quality than about food safety. There's nothing wrong with that, but here are a few pointers that have produce safety in mind.

Shop in clean markets. Cleanliness is a good indication that the market takes its role in food safety seriously. The display cases should be cleaned regularly to prevent cross contamination, and damaged and decayed fruit or vegetables (which may carry more pathogens) should be removed on a regular basis.

If you're buying any cut-up fruits or vegetables or packaged greens, be sure they've been kept cold, either in a refrigerated display case or surrounded by ice. When a fruit or vegetable is cut, the cells



Washing can reduce contamination if it's there, but it can't eliminate it. Bacteria can be sticky, so rinsing them off isn't as easy as wiping dust off a table.

are ruptured, releasing the moisture and nutrients bacteria thrive on. Keeping things cold holds the pathogens in check (and it also helps protect against spoilage). The packaging on cut produce should be cold to the touch. Don't buy it if it isn't. And be sure to store the food in the fridge once you get it home. The temperature inside your refrigerator should be 40°F.

Always bag your produce. Those rolls of plastic bags in the produce section aren't just for weighing vegetables; they're also important for sanitary reasons. Even if you're buying only one avocado, it's worth putting it in a bag. Grocery carts are rarely cleaned and conveyor belts at the checkout aren't cleaned often enough, so a bag provides another barrier to germs. Also, to avoid cross-contamination, keep your fruits and vegetables separate from raw meats, poultry, and seafood, both in your grocery cart and in the checkout bags.

How to wash depends on what you're washing

You might think that simply rinsing your fruits and vegetables with water would wash off any potential pathogens, but unfortunately, it's not that easy. Washing can reduce contamination if it's there, but it can't completely eliminate it. One reason for this is that bacteria can be sticky. Rinsing them off isn't as easy as wiping dust off a table; it's more like removing grease or garden dirt from your hands. And like your hands, the surface of fruits and vegetables isn't perfectly smooth. Even fruit like apples and tomatoes aren't as smooth as they look. When you're the size of bacteria, the surface of an apple has lots of nooks and crannies to wedge into. And the more craggy the surface, the more places there are to hide, making it more difficult to eliminate pathogens.

For firm fruit and vegetables, such as apples, melons, and tomatoes, rub well while rinsing under water. For these foods, rinsing and rubbing is quite effective at removing tiny pathogens. Just use your hand or a vegetable brush under running water. (If you use a brush, be sure to replace or wash it

For leafy greens, rinsing is more effective than soaking

When cooks talk about the best way to store and wash fruits and vegetables, they're usually most concerned with flavor and aesthetic matters: preserving freshness or eliminating grit, for example. But as a food safety expert, I'm also looking for the most effective way to remove or minimize numbers of bacteria. Usually, the same method can satisfy both cooks and food safety folks. But when it comes to lettuce, spinach, or other leafy greens, we part ways.

Cooks like to wash their greens by soaking them in a big bowl of water (see p. 49). This is a very good way to remove sand and grit, but it can actually increase the risk of moving contamination around—from one leaf to everything in the bowl. A much more effective way to remove potential pathogens is to discard the outer leaves, which is where most contamination would be, and wash each individual leaf under running water.

So as a home cook, you have a choice. You can focus on grit removal and soak in a bowl of water. Or you can decide to make the very low risk of contamination even lower by rinsing under water. If you want to combine both methods, it would be best to soak the leaves first and rinse them afterwards.

regularly.) Don't worry so much about the length of time—5 seconds is about as effective as 20 seconds—but rather focus on rubbing the whole surface, which will take longer for a cantaloupe than for an apple.

For produce with softer or complex texture, such as berries, broccoli, and spinach, a simple rinse is sometimes the only option. For this type of produce, rubbing individual pieces is more difficult. It's tricky to quantify the effectiveness of various washing techniques since there are many variables at play, but we do know that merely rinsing can help, even if only a little. Cooking vegetables results in better than a 100,000-fold reduction in pathogens (if the bacteria are present in the first place). When you rinse, rub, and dry an apple, you might achieve a 1,000-fold reduction in bacteria. For soft fruits and vegetables that you can only rinse, you might get a 10-fold decrease. But that translates into a 90% reduction, so even though a simple rinse doesn't produce the kind of numbers that get microbiologists excited, it does still have an impact.

Wash fruits and vegetables even if you're going to peel them. If there are bacteria on the rind, they're easily transferred to the inner surfaces during peeling or cutting. And once you've peeled or cut up a vegetable, it's virtually impossible to wash off any contamination. Cut surfaces provide more places for a microbe to hide, and they also tend to be difficult to rub.

Drying fruits and vegetables with a paper towel or in a clean salad spinner provides another measure of safety. This is because bacteria become suspended in water droplets after washing, so by removing the water, you're increasing the efficiency of the wash.

Linda J. Harris is a faculty member at the University of California, Davis, where she is the associate director for research at the Western Institute for Food Safety and Security and a specialist in cooperative extension in the Department of Food Science and Technology. Her research focuses on microbial food safety with an emphasis on fruits, vegetables, and tree nuts. ♦

Cannellini Beans

These plump creamy-white beans, which sometimes go by the name of white kidney beans, lend a mellow, earthy flavor to anything from soups and stews to salads, dips, and purées. Dried cannellini beans give excellent results, but we don't always have the time or inclination to soak and simmer them, especially on a hot summer day. That's when we turn to canned cannellini—give them a rinse, toss with a few aromatics, and a refreshing salad is ready in minutes. To find out which brand of cannellini is worth stashing in your pantry, we held a blind tasting of six widely available brands. While differences in flavor and texture weren't dramatic, top honors went to the beans with a creamier texture and a cleaner bean flavor.

BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO

Top Pick

BUSH'S

79¢ (15 oz.)

These rose-tinged beans were soft and creamy, with a clean bean flavor, a good salt level, and a pleasant hint of sweetness. While we singled them out mainly for their well-balanced flavor, their good looks won us over. Nice and plump, they were uniform in size and largely intact, making them a top choice for dishes where appearance matters, such as bean salads.



Runners-up

Beans numbered in order of preference; prices will vary.



1 PASTENE
99¢ (15 oz.)

These handsome beans almost tied for first place with Bush's. Tasters loved their mild, earthy flavor and well-balanced saltiness and praised their smooth, "peachy white," almost intact skins. But their texture didn't please everyone: A few thought their skins were a bit tough and their interior faintly chalky. Overall, they were tasty and attractive enough to use in any kind of bean dish.



2 PROGRESSO
\$1.27 (19 oz.)

These cream-colored beans were large and uniform in shape, with a nutty flavor and just enough salt to bring out their earthiness. A couple of tasters, though, detected a slightly metallic flavor and a "tinny" aftertaste. While they had thin, tender skins and a smooth flesh ("like a perfect purée"), their texture was a bit uneven, with some beans seeming tougher than others.



3 RIENZI
79¢ (15 oz.)

Quite firm and a bit dry, these beans seemed a little undercooked. They'd be a good choice for recipes where further cooking is needed—in soups, for example. While they had very few split skins and held their shape pretty well, their flavor wasn't stellar: A bit bland and bitter, they tasted a little "processed," reminding some tasters of canned tuna.



4 GOYA
\$1.29 (1 lb. 13 oz.)

These beans had a full, "beany" flavor (some tasters noticed a "fruity" aftertaste) and a decent creamy texture, but it was appearance that brought down their overall score. They were grayish, broken, and mushy, with lots of skins slipping off—by far the worst looking of the bunch. A good choice for dips and purées, where shabby looks isn't a flaw.



5 EDEN ORGANICS
\$1.69 (15 oz.)

No salt added
We really missed the salt in these beans, so much so that it seemed as if "all the flavor was sucked out of them." Their texture was relatively smooth and buttery, if a bit too soft, and they didn't look bad either, but it was hard to get past their bland, watery flavor. ♦

where to buy it

Grilled Appetizers, p. 36

You can find sherry vinegar in specialty stores and some supermarkets, but you can also order it online at Tienda.com (800-710-4304); prices start at \$12.95. IGourmet.com (877-446-8763) sells pimentón for \$2.99 for a 2.7-ounce container. If your local grocery store doesn't carry Bûcheron cheese, you can find it at MurraysCheese.com for \$11.99 a pound.

Lemon Cheesecake Squares, p. 52

Parchment paper for lining baking pans is available at BakersCatalogue.com (800-827-6836); a package of 100 half-sheets sells for \$18.95.

Chinese Chicken Salad, p. 58

Both sweet and hot Asian chile sauces are available in Asian groceries and some supermarkets, as well as from online stores like EthnicGrocer.com and TempleOfThai.com.

Outdoor Kitchen, p. 54

Deborah Krasner hosts five-day culinary vacations at her Vermont home in the summer and fall. Visit CulinaryVermont.com for details.

Fruit Cobbler, p. 60

BulkFoods.com (419-537-1713) is a good mail-order source for turbinado and demerara sugars. Prices start at \$3.51 and \$4.25 per pound, respectively.



In Season, p. 20

Poblano seedlings are available at many garden centers. TheChileWoman.com sells a variety of organically grown chile seedlings, including poblanos.

Toppings for Grilled Fish, p. 40

To help lift fish from the grill, both tongs and a fish spatula are invaluable. Visit Oxo.com (800-545-4411) for locking tongs in various sizes (from \$8.99). Fish spatulas are available in many kitchenwares stores, or visit PCD.com (800-792-6650), where prices start at \$34.99.

Look for Espelette chile powder (piment d'Espelette) at ChefShop.com (800-596-0885), where a 1.4-ounce jar sells for \$10.99.

Cooking for a Crowd, p. 26a

The basic tools you'll need for grilling are available in most kitchenwares stores, including online stores. You can also try visiting a Web site that specializes in them, like BBQproshop.com or Barbecue-Store.com.

For the grilled Thai chicken breast recipe, look to your local Asian market or visit TempleOfThai.com (877-811-8773) for Thai bird chiles (2 ounces for \$3.99) and lemongrass (3 pieces for \$4.99). ♦

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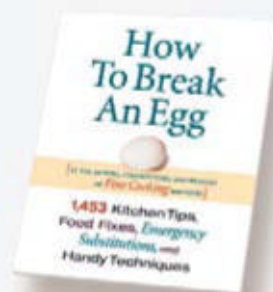
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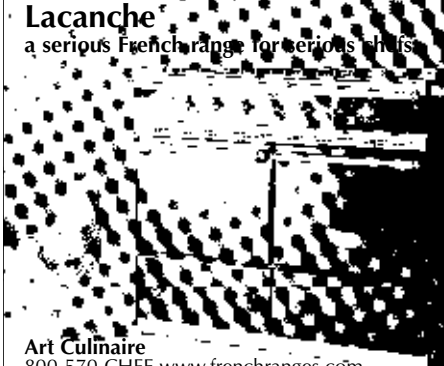
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Recipe	Page	Calories		Protein	Carb	Fats (g)				Chol.	Sodium	Fiber	Notes
		total	from fat	(g)	(g)	total	sat	mono	poly	(mg)	(mg)	(g)	
In Season	20												
Quesadillas w/ Roasted Poblanos & Onions		240	140	10	15	16	8	4.5	2	35	450	1	based on 8 servings
Grilling for a Crowd	26a												
Farmers' Market Crudités w/ Buttermilk Herb Dip		110	45	5	13	5	3.5	0	0	20	250	3	based on 12 servings
Grilled Bruschetta w/ White Bean Purée & Tomatoes		260	120	5	28	14	2	10	1.5	0	430	2	based on 12 servings
Grilled Herb-Crusted Leg of Lamb w/ Fresh Mint Sauce		290	100	40	4	12	3.5	6	1	120	870	0	based on 12 servings
Grilled Thai Chicken Breasts w/ Herb-Lemongrass Crust		240	70	39	3	7	4	1.5	1	105	510	0	based on 12 servings
Argentine Spice-Rubbed Flank Steak w/ Salsa Criolla		320	160	35	3	18	6	5	1	65	615	0	based on 12 servings
Chopped Tomato & Cucumber Salad w/ Mint & Feta		190	150	4	7	17	4.5	11	1.5	15	830	1	based on 12 servings
Grilled Southwestern Potato Salad		270	150	6	27	17	3	11	2	5	610	4	based on 12 servings
Warm Pasta Salad w/ Tomatoes, Zucchini & Pecorino		260	90	9	32	11	4	4	1	15	480	2	based on 12 servings
Grilled Asparagus & Onions w/ Balsamic & Blue Cheese		150	120	3	8	13	2.5	8	2	5	200	2	based on 12 servings
Grilled Corn on the Cob w/ Thyme & Red Pepper Butter		210	140	3	18	16	8	6	1.5	30	300	3	based on 8 servings
Grilled Appetizers	36												
Shrimp Skewers		170	90	18	1	10	1.5	7	1.5	170	290	0	based on 6 servings
Pancetta & Pineapple Skewers		160	130	3	5	15	3.5	9	1.5	15	450	1	based on 6 servings
Mini Tuna Burgers w/ Mint-Caper Aioli on Pita Triangles		280	160	16	14	18	3	11	2.5	50	260	2	based on 8 servings
Bacon-Wrapped Stuffed Apricots		180	90	7	16	10	4	3	1	20	280	2	based on 8 servings
Tomato & Olive Pizzettas w/ Fennel Seeds & Goat Cheese		280	130	9	26	15	4.5	6	1	15	670	1	based on 8 servings
Grilled Fish & Toppings	40												
Grilled Fish w/ Sun-Dried Tomato, Olive & Caper Relish		420	230	40	4	26	4.5	16	4.5	65	570	1	based on 6 servings
Grilled Fish w/ Lemon, Dill & Cucumber Sauce		360	180	40	2	21	4	12	3.5	65	390	0	based on 6 servings
Grilled Fish w/ Sea Salt, Chile & Lime Butter		410	240	40	1	27	12	9	3.5	105	450	0	based on 6 servings
Grilled Fish w/ Tarragon-Scented Mayonnaise		440	260	40	2	29	4.5	17	6	80	400	0	w/ 2 Tbs. mayonnaise
Summer Pasta	43												
Spaghetti w/ Spicy Shrimp & Cherry Tomatoes		830	310	35	93	35	5	23	4.5	170	460	6	based on 4 servings
Rigatoni w/ Squash, Spicy Sausage & Goat Cheese		500	170	19	61	19	6	9	2	25	760	3	based on 6 servings
Orecchiette w/ Caramelized Onions & Green Beans		680	190	19	104	22	4	13	2.5	5	570	8	based on 4 servings
Green Salads	46												
Mixed Green Salad w/ Red-Wine & Dijon Vinaigrette		60	45	1	2	5	0.5	3.5	0.5	0	170	1	based on 8 servings
Butter Lettuce w/ Poppy Seed & Tarragon Crème Fraîche		60	40	2	3	4.5	2.5	1	0.5	10	150	1	based on 6 servings
Mâche w/ Spicy Melon & Pink-Peppercorn Dressing		120	60	3	15	7	1	3	3	0	180	3	based on 4 servings
Arugula & Fennel Salad w/ Orange & Fennel Seed Dressing		160	120	3	9	14	1.5	10	1.5	0	170	3	based on 4 servings
Lemon Cheesecake Squares	52												
Lemon Cheesecake Squares		260	150	4	24	16	9	4.5	1	95	160	0	based on 16 servings
Chinese Chicken Salad	58												
Chinese Chicken Salad		540	270	45	20	31	5	15	9	105	1060	4	based on 4 servings
Fruit Cobblers	60												
Plum Cobbler w/ Almonds, Lemon Zest & Ginger		350	120	5	52	14	7	4.5	1	30	190	3	based on 10 servings
Triple Berry Cobbler w/ Pecans & Cinnamon		340	130	5	48	15	7	4.5	2	30	190	5	based on 10 servings
Raspberry-Peach Cobbler w/ Cornmeal Biscuits		310	90	4	50	10	7	2	0.5	30	190	5	based on 10 servings
Test Kitchen	64												
Gravlax		80	35	8	2	4	1	1.5	1.5	20	1230	0	based on 12 servings
Steak & Eggs Rancheros		460	270	27	22	30	9	15	4	255	910	6	based on 2 servings
Prosciutto-Wrapped Melon w/ Mint & White Balsamic		70	20	7	7	2.5	1	0	0	15	580	1	based on 8 servings
Quick & Delicious	78a												
Egg Salad w/ Smoked Salmon, Capers & Dill		340	260	18	3	30	6	19	3.5	325	1580	1	based on 4 servings
Orzo & Grilled Vegetable Salad w/ Feta & Olives		380	210	8	36	23	4.5	15	2.5	10	450	4	based on 6 servings
Grilled Salmon Bundles w/ Saffron, Tomatoes & Olives		430	250	39	3	28	4	16	7	105	390	1	based on 4 servings
Grilled Portabella Sandwiches w/ Tomatoes & Mozzarella		540	300	18	43	34	8	12	3	20	850	5	based on 4 servings
Tomatillo Gazpacho		190	140	4	12	15	2.5	10	2	0	170	6	based on 6 servings
Spicy Fried Chicken		150	45	18	8	5	1.5	2	1	55	210	1	based on 6 servings
Grilled Asian Pork Tenderloin w/ Peanut Sauce		300	110	39	7	12	3.5	2.5	0.5	100	490	1	based on 5 servings
Back Cover													
Balsamic-Macerated Strawberries w/ Basil		40	5	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	based on 8 servings

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used. Optional

ingredients with measured amounts are included; ingredients without specific quantities are not. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used. When the

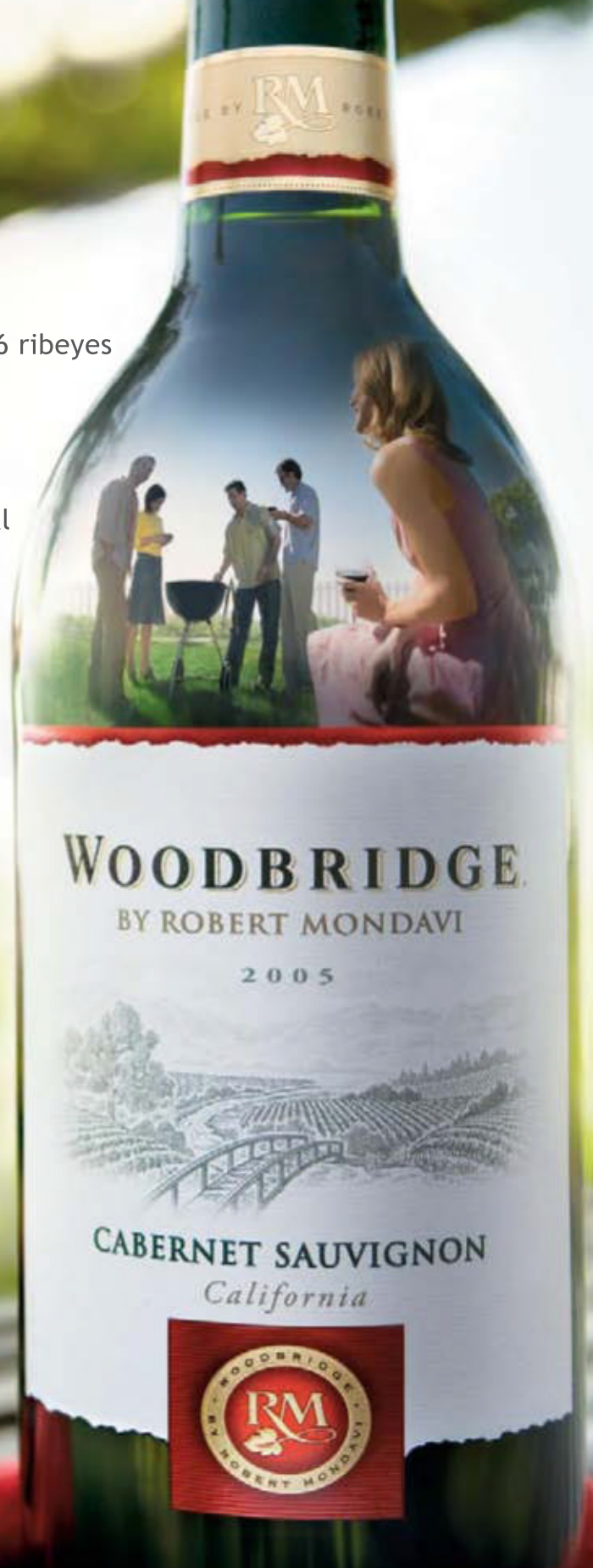
quantities of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper per serving for entrées, and ⅛ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper per serving for side dishes.

6 ribeyes

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BY ROBERT MONDAVI

Bringing out the best in berries

This quick dessert pairs two icons of the season—strawberries and basil—in an unexpected way. The sweet and sour balsamic vinegar helps amplify the flavor of the berries, even if they're less than ripe.

Balsamic-Macerated Strawberries with Basil

Serves four as a dessert; six to eight as a filling or topping.

For this recipe, there's no need for an expensive, artisanal balsamic vinegar—a grocery-store vinegar is perfectly well suited.

2 lb. fresh strawberries, rinsed, hulled, and sliced $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick (about 4 cups)
1 Tbs. granulated sugar
2 tsp. balsamic vinegar
8 to 10 medium fresh basil leaves

In a large bowl, gently toss the strawberries with the sugar and vinegar. Let sit at room temperature until the strawberries have released their juices but are not yet mushy, about 30 minutes. (Don't let the berries sit for more than 90 minutes, or they'll start to collapse.)

Just before serving, stack the basil leaves on a cutting board and roll them vertically into a loose cigar shape. Using a sharp chef's knife, very thinly slice across the roll to make a fine chiffonade of basil.

Portion the strawberries and their juices among four small bowls and scatter with the basil to garnish, or choose one of the serving suggestions at right.

Sarah Breckenridge, associate Web editor ♦

Sweet ways to serve

- ❖ Serve the strawberries over grilled or toasted pound cake (photo above).
- ❖ Put the berries on split biscuits for short-cakes; top with whipped cream and scatter with the basil.
- ❖ Layer the berries with ice cream or yogurt for a parfait. Garnish with the basil.
- ❖ Spoon the strawberries over a poached or roasted peach half.
- ❖ Use the berries as a filling for crêpes or a topping for waffles.
- ❖ Mash the berries slightly and fold into whipped cream for a quick fool. Garnish with the basil.

Hull berries carefully

To maintain a strawberry's beautiful shape, use a paring knife to remove the cap with an angled cut.



Grilling for a Crowd

Create a custom menu for 10 to 12 guests
with these recipes

BY TONY ROSENFELD

Summer party menu

Once warmer weather hits, so does the urge to entertain. With this pullout, we've made it easy to assemble a winning meal: Just mix and match from the following crowd-friendly main dishes, starters, and sides. When planning, keep in mind that the main dishes should be marinated several hours or a day in advance. All of these recipes serve 10 to 12 people.

Mains: Choose 1

Grilled Herb-Crusted Leg of Lamb
with Fresh Mint Sauce

Grilled Thai Chicken Breasts
with Herb-Lemongrass Crust

Argentine Spice-Rubbed Flank Steak
with Salsa Criolla

Starters: Choose 1

Farmers' Market Crudités
with Buttermilk Herb Dip

Grilled Bruschetta with Rosemary-
White Bean Purée & Heirloom
Tomatoes

Sides: Choose 2

Chopped Tomato & Cucumber Salad
with Mint & Feta

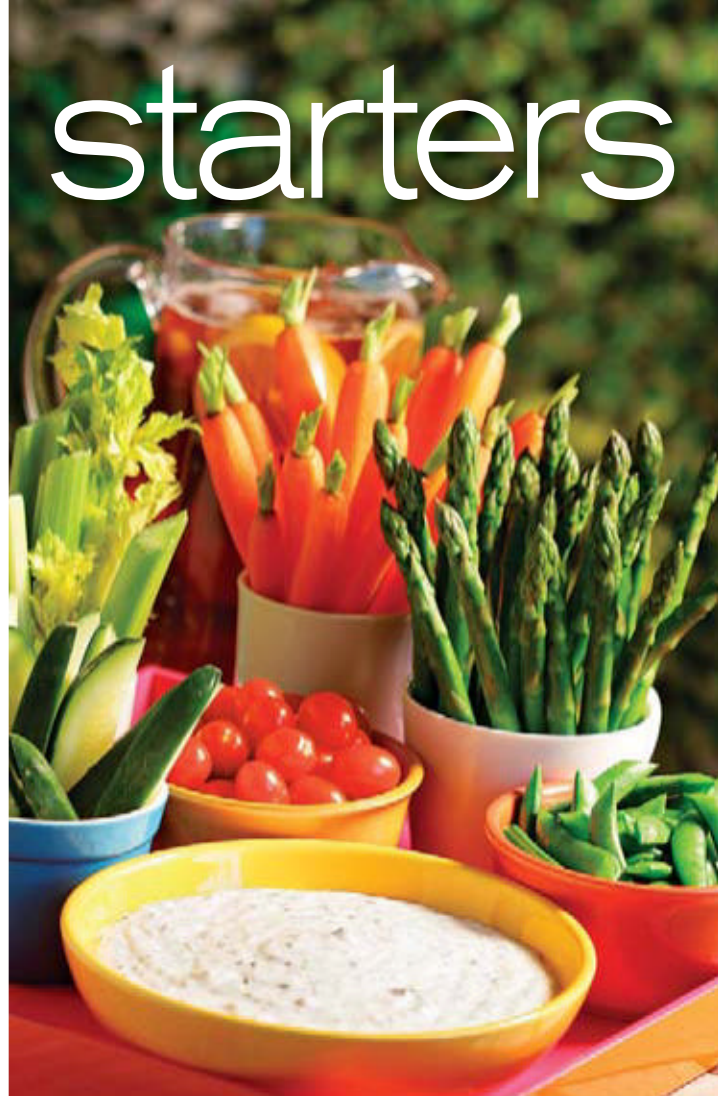
Grilled Southwestern Potato Salad

Warm Pasta Salad with Grilled
Tomatoes, Zucchini & Pecorino

Grilled Asparagus & Onions
with Balsamic Vinegar & Blue Cheese

Grilled Corn on the Cob with Thyme
& Roasted Red Pepper Butter

starters



Farmers' Market Crudités with Buttermilk Herb Dip

*Serves twelve as an appetizer;
yields 3 cups dip.*

Though I have listed my own favorite vegetables for these crudités, feel free to go with whatever looks good at the market.

FOR THE DIP:

- 1 cup plain whole-milk yogurt
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup buttermilk
- 1 cup thinly sliced fresh chives
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh dill
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme
- 1 small clove garlic, minced and mashed to a paste with a pinch of salt
- 1 Tbs. cider vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. Tabasco; more to taste
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. coarsely ground black pepper

FOR THE CRUDITES:

- 1 lb. pickling cucumbers
(I like using small French or Armenian types), cut into

spears 3 to 4 inches long and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick

1 lb. sugar snap peas, strings and stem ends trimmed

1 lb. small, slender carrots, peeled and cut into 3- to 4-inch lengths (halve or quarter them lengthwise if they're thick)

1 pint grape or cherry tomatoes

In a large bowl, whisk all of the ingredients for the dip. Season with more Tabasco, salt, and pepper, to taste. Let sit for 15 minutes.

Arrange the vegetables on a large platter, with the dip in the center, or put each vegetable in its own bowl and arrange with the dip on a tray. Let guests help themselves.

Make ahead: The dip can be made up to 1 day ahead.

Wine pairing: A crisp Pinot Grigio like the 2005 Zenato Delle Venezie, \$17 (magnum).



Grilled Bruschetta with Rosemary-White Bean Purée & Heirloom Tomatoes

Serves ten to twelve.

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil;
more as needed

4 cloves garlic, smashed and peeled

Two 3- to 4-inch sprigs plus 1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary

2 large ripe heirloom tomatoes (about $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb.), cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice (about 3 cups)

2 Tbs. chopped fresh mint

$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt; more as needed

One 15-oz. can cannellini beans, rinsed well and drained

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

1 to 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. freshly ground black pepper; more as needed

1 lb. baguette, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slices

Heat the oil, garlic, and rosemary sprigs in a small saucepan over medium heat until they start to sizzle steadily and become fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Let the oil cool to room temperature. Strain the oil into a measuring cup. (If making ahead, store in the refrigerator and use within 3 days.)

Put the tomatoes in a medium bowl and toss with 3 Tbs. of the

garlic oil, the mint, and 1 tsp. of the salt.

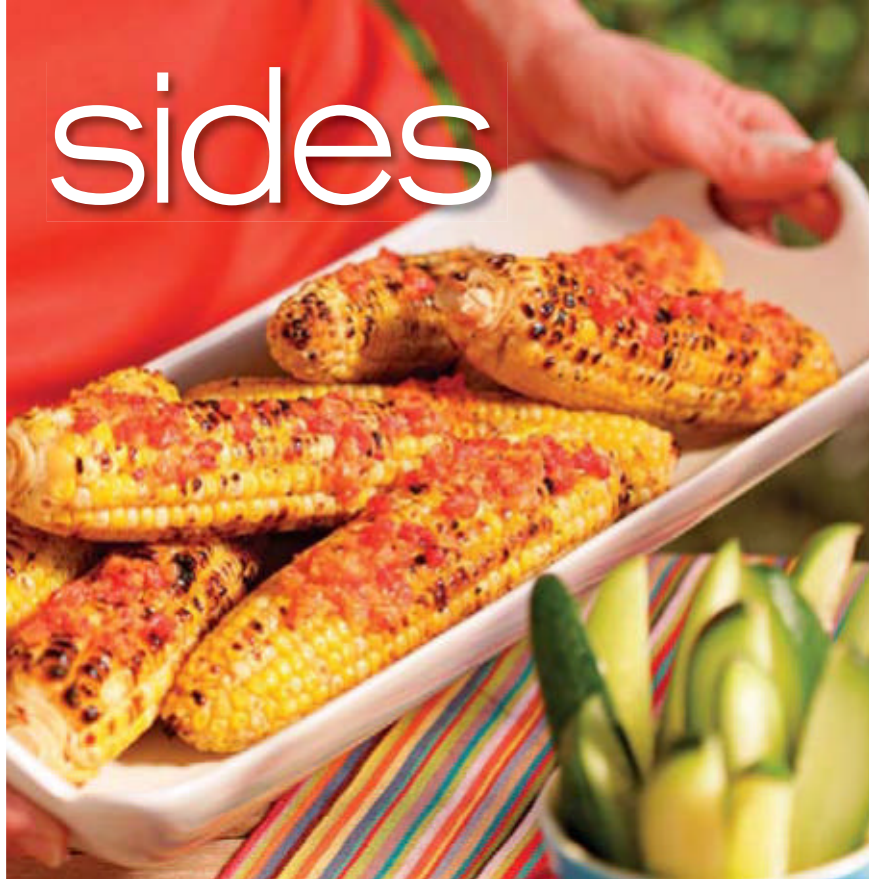
Put the beans in a food processor and add about 6 Tbs. of the garlic oil, the Parmigiano, 1 Tbs. of the lemon juice, the chopped rosemary, remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt, and the black pepper and purée until smooth. Season to taste with more salt, pepper, and lemon juice.

Heat a gas grill to medium high or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire. Brush both sides of the bread with the remaining garlic oil. (If you run out, use plain olive oil to finish.) Sprinkle lightly with salt. Grill the bread until crisp, with nice grill marks on both sides, 1 to 2 minutes per side.

Spread the grilled bread with the bean purée, top with a generous spoonful of the tomatoes and their juices, sprinkle lightly with pepper, and set out on a large platter so your guests can help themselves.

Wine pairing: Try a crisp, herbal Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand like the 2006 Kim Crawford, Marlborough, \$14.

sides



Grilled Corn on the Cob with Thyme & Roasted Red Pepper Butter

Serves eight.

The butter in this dish is at once sweet and tangy, a bright addition to plain old grilled corn on the cob.

- 4 oz. (½ cup) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature**
- 2 jarred roasted red peppers, drained well, patted dry, and finely chopped (½ to ⅔ cup)**
- 1 large shallot, minced (¼ cup)**
- 1½ Tbs. sherry vinegar**
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme**
- 2 tsp. kosher salt**
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper; more as needed**
- 8 ears corn, shucked**
- 2 Tbs. olive oil**

Put the butter, red peppers, shallot, vinegar, 2 tsp. of the thyme, 1 tsp. of the salt, and the black pepper in a food processor and pulse until blended (it's fine if it's still slightly chunky and looks a little separated). Transfer to a large piece of plastic wrap and roll tightly, twisting the ends so the bundle acquires a sausage shape. (Store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.) When ready to grill the corn, slice the butter into ⅓-inch-thick rounds.

Heat a gas grill to medium or prepare a low charcoal fire. If desired, cut each ear of corn in half. Toss the corn with the oil, the remaining 1 tsp. salt, and a few grinds of black pepper. Put the ears on the grill and if using gas, reduce the heat to medium low. Cover and grill the

corn, turning every couple of minutes, until browned all over and tender, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a large platter, top with about half of the butter and the remaining 1 tsp. thyme. Serve, passing the remaining butter on the side.

How hot is your grill fire?

On both gas and charcoal grills, the length of time you can hold your outstretched palm an inch or two above the grill grate indicates the temperature range. If you can stand the heat for less than 1 second, the grill is very hot, over 600°F. If you can hold your hand in place for 1 to 2 seconds, the grill is considered hot, or between 400° and 500°F. If you can withstand 3 to 4 seconds, the grill is medium, or 350° to 375°F. If you can hold your hand in place for 5 to 7 seconds, the grill is medium low, or 325° to 350°F.



Chopped Tomato & Cucumber Salad with Mint & Feta

Serves ten to twelve.

This bright salad is a great addition to a large, summer buffet, though it also makes a fine lunch or light dinner accompanied by some warm pita. If serving as a main course, toss in some diced grilled chicken breasts for more substance, if you like.

- 2 pints ripe grape or cherry tomatoes, halved lengthwise**
- ½ cup lightly chopped fresh mint**
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme**
- 2 tsp. kosher salt**
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper; more as needed**
- ½ lb. feta cheese, coarsely crumbled (2 cups)**
- 1 lemon, zest finely grated (1 Tbs.) and juiced (¼ cup)**
- 1 English (seedless) cucumber, cut into ½-inch dice (4 cups)**
- 4 scallions (both white and green parts), trimmed and thinly sliced (½ cup)**
- 2 cups pitted Kalamata or Gaeta olives, halved**
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil**

In a medium bowl, toss the tomatoes with ¼ cup of the mint, ½ Tbs. of the thyme, the salt, and ½ tsp. of the pepper. In another medium bowl, toss the feta with the lemon zest, the remaining ½ tsp. pepper, ¼ cup mint, and ½ Tbs. thyme. Let both sit for at least 15 minutes and up to 1 hour at room temperature.

In a large bowl, toss the cucumber, scallions, and olives with the tomatoes and feta. Combine up to 1 hour ahead; let sit at room temperature. Just before serving, add the olive oil and half of the lemon juice and toss well. Season with pepper and more lemon juice if needed, and serve.



Grilled Southwestern Potato Salad

Serves ten to twelve.

This potato salad is filled with favorite flavorings of the Southwest—corn, chiles, red onions, peppers, and some crisp bacon.

- 2 large red onions, cut into ½-inch disks and threaded onto metal skewers**
- 4 red bell peppers, halved, cored, and seeded**
- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 tsp. plus 2 Tbs. kosher salt; more as needed**
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper; more as needed**
- 1½ cups cooked fresh corn kernels (from 2 ears)**
- ½ lb. bacon (8 to 9 slices), cooked until crisp, drained, and crumbled**
- ¾ cup chopped fresh cilantro**
- 1 tsp. chili powder**
- 3 lb. red potatoes, cut into 1½-inch pieces**
- 3 Tbs. cider vinegar; more as needed**

Heat a gas grill to medium or prepare a charcoal fire with medium- and low-heat areas. Put the onions and peppers on a rimmed baking sheet and sprinkle with 2 Tbs. of the oil, 2 tsp. of the salt, and the pepper. Turn and rub the vegetables to coat all over with the oil and seasonings.

Grill the vegetables, covered, until they have good grill marks, about 5 minutes. Flip, cover, and continue to grill until the peppers are softened and nicely browned, about 5 more minutes. As they finish cooking, transfer the peppers to the baking sheet. Reduce the heat on the gas grill to medium low or transfer the

onions to the cooler part of the fire and continue cooking until they are just tender and browned (it's fine if they're charred in places), about 8 more minutes. Move to a cutting board and let cool. Scrape the skins off the peppers if you like. Coarsely chop the peppers and onions and toss in a large serving bowl along with the corn, bacon, cilantro, and chili powder.

Put the potatoes in a large pot, cover with cold water by a couple of inches, stir in the remaining 2 Tbs. of salt, and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook until the potatoes are just tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Drain and toss with the grilled vegetables, the remaining ½ cup plus 2 Tbs. oil, and the vinegar. Season with salt, pepper, and more vinegar to taste. Let sit at least 30 minutes and up to 2 hours at room temperature before serving.

Make it pretty

Put some thought into serving and garnishing your dishes.

The color of the serving plate or platter should complement the color of the food. Keep garnishes simple, using just an herb or ingredient from the recipe to clue people into the flavor of the dish.



Warm Pasta Salad with Grilled Tomatoes, Zucchini & Pecorino

Serves ten to twelve as a side dish or six as a main course.

- 1½ lb. ripe plum tomatoes (about 8), cored and halved lengthwise**
- 1¼ lb. small zucchini (about 4), trimmed and halved lengthwise**
- 5 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 4 tsp. chopped fresh thyme**
- 2 tsp. kosher salt; more as needed**
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper; more as needed**
- 6 oz. Pecorino Romano, shaved with a vegetable peeler (about 2 cups)**
- 1 lb. dried penne**
- ¼ cup thinly sliced fresh chives**
- 2 tsp. balsamic vinegar**

Prepare a medium fire on a gas grill or a medium-hot charcoal fire. In a large bowl, toss the tomatoes and zucchini with 2 Tbs. of the oil, 2 tsp. of the thyme, and the salt and pepper.

Set the vegetables cut side down on the grill and cook without moving them until they have good grill marks, 5 to 7 minutes. Flip and cook until browned and tender, 6 to 8 more minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and let cool for a couple of minutes. Coarsely chop, return them to the same large bowl along with 1½ cups of the pecorino, and toss. Let sit for up to a couple of hours at room temperature.

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and cook, stirring often, until just al dente, about 11 minutes. Drain well and toss with the tomato mixture, 3 Tbs. of the chives, the remaining 3 Tbs. olive oil and the balsamic vinegar. Season generously with salt and pepper to taste and transfer to a serving bowl. Sprinkle with the remaining 1 Tbs. chives, 2 tsp. thyme, and ½ cup pecorino, and serve.

Make ahead: You can grill the tomatoes and zucchini a couple of hours before serving. Hold them in a large bowl at room temperature. Cook the pasta just before guests arrive and toss it with the vegetables.

Grilled Asparagus & Onions with Balsamic Vinegar & Blue Cheese

Serves ten to twelve as a side dish.

This warm salad with its rich ingredients is just the thing for a cool early- or late-summer get-together. The tanginess of the balsamic adds some bounce to the blue cheese and complements the sweetness of the grilled vegetables and figs.

2½ lb. asparagus (about 2 large bunches), trimmed
8 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
1 tsp. kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 large sweet onion (such as Vidalia), cut into ½-inch disks and threaded onto metal skewers
2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar
2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
3 oz. good-quality blue cheese, crumbled (¾ cup)
⅓ cup thinly sliced dried Black Mission figs (preferably small ones)
¼ cup pine nuts, toasted

Heat a gas grill to medium or prepare a medium charcoal fire.

Put the asparagus on a rimmed baking sheet, drizzle with 2 Tbs. of the oil, and

season with ½ tsp. of the salt and a few generous grinds of black pepper. Turn to coat. Grill the asparagus (covered on a gas grill) until they have nice grill marks, about 4 minutes. Turn and continue cooking until tender and browned, about 4 more minutes; transfer to a large platter. Reduce the heat on the gas grill to medium low or let the charcoal burn down a bit.

On a rimmed baking sheet, coat the onions with 2 Tbs. of the oil, the remaining ½ tsp. salt, and several grinds of pepper. Grill, covered, until tender and browned, 8 to 10 minutes per side. Return the onions to the baking sheet.

In a small bowl, whisk together the remaining ¼ cup olive oil, the vinegar, and thyme. Toss the asparagus with about half the vinaigrette and then arrange neatly on the platter. Scatter the onions over the asparagus and drizzle with the remaining vinaigrette. Sprinkle with the blue cheese, figs, and pine nuts, and serve; this can sit for up to 1 hour at room temperature.



Grilling checklist

Essential equipment to assemble before firing up the grill:

Long-handled, spring-loaded tongs to handle everything. Never use that giant fork that comes with a barbecue tools set; it just pokes holes in meat and lets precious juices escape.

Large spatula or two. These come in handy when turning large pieces of meat or handling delicate vegetables.

Hot pads or dishtowels. Mitts can be too bulky, but folded dishtowels work as well as potholders. Have an extra towel on hand for cleanup.

Metal skewers. You'll need these for grilling the onions for the Grilled Asparagus & Onions with Balsamic Vinegar & Blue Cheese, or the Grilled Southwestern Potato Salad.

Wire-bristled brush. Use to clean the grill grate (which is easiest while it's still warm).

Table or other launching and landing surface. If your grill doesn't have an adjacent shelf, you'll need a small table or some other place to stage food for the grill and stack a few clean plates and platters for food coming off the grill.

Instant-read thermometer. Take the guess-work out of when your meats are done.

Tony Rosenfeld is a contributing editor at Fine Cooking. ♦

mains



Argentine Spice-Rubbed Flank Steak with Salsa Criolla

Serves twelve.

Chimichurri is the star salsa of the Argentine grill, but the lesser known salsa criolla was my favorite when I visited that country. Full of onions, red peppers, and herbs, the mixture is a light but intensely flavorful condiment for grilled steak.

- 3 cloves garlic, minced and mashed to a paste with a pinch of salt**
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme**
- 1 Tbs. freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 Tbs. chili powder**
- 2 tsp. brown sugar**
- 1½ Tbs. plus 2 tsp. kosher salt**
- 4½ lb. flank steak (about 3 medium steaks), trimmed of excess fat**
- 1 large ripe tomato, cored, seeded, and finely diced (about 1¼ cup)**
- 1 medium yellow onion, minced (about 1⅓ cups)**
- ½ red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and minced (about ½ cup)**
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- ⅓ cup white-wine vinegar**

In a small bowl, mix about two-thirds of the garlic paste with 1 Tbs. of the thyme, 2 tsp. of the black pepper, the chili powder, brown sugar, and 1½ Tbs. of the

salt. Arrange the steaks on a rimmed baking sheet and pat the spice rub all over them. Cover and let sit for at least 4 hours and up to 1 day in the refrigerator.

In a 1-qt. sealable container, combine the tomato, onion, red pepper, oil, and vinegar with ¼ cup water, and the remaining garlic paste, 1 Tbs. thyme, 2 tsp. salt, and 1 tsp. black pepper. Shake well. Refrigerate for up to 1 day before serving.

Heat a gas grill to medium high or prepare a hot charcoal fire. Grill the steak (covered on a gas grill) until it has good grill marks on the first side, 4 to 5 minutes. Flip the steak; if using a gas grill, reduce the heat to medium and cover the grill. Continue to cook until done to your liking (make a slit in the steak to take a peek), 4 to 5 minutes more for medium rare; 6 to 7 minutes more for medium.

Let the steak rest on a cutting board for 5 minutes and then slice thinly across the grain. Stir or shake the salsa criolla and serve with the steak.

Wine pairing: A supple, fruity Merlot like the 2003 Black Box, California, \$25 (3 liters).

Grilled T-Bone Steaks with Herb-Lemon Crust

Serves twelve.

Before chopping, be sure to cut the top and ends off to eliminate the risk of off a few of the fat you're left with the heart of the

- 1½ cups chopped herb leaves (leaves are 3/4 cup)**
- ¾ cup coconut oil**
- ¼ cup finely chopped lemongrass (2 stalks)**
- 12 fresh basil leaves**
- 3 Thai bird chilies, seeded, and finely diced**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1½ Tbs. kosher salt**
- 2 tsp. packed brown sugar**
- 1½ tsp. fresh lemon juice**
- ¾ tsp. ground black pepper**

¾ tsp. ground black pepper

Grilled T-Bone Steaks

Serves twelve.

Boneless T-bone steaks are a feeding a crowd favorite, and they're varied doneness flattening it to make

Strategies for feeding a crowd

With a little planning and prepping, your cookout will go smoothly and you'll be able to spend more time with your guests. Here are some tips for entertaining a crowd:

Clean out the refrigerator or prepare a large cooler to accommodate all the meats, side dishes, and drinks.

Make sure you have more than enough plates, napkins, glasses, and utensils. In a crowd, people tend to lose track of their glasses, and someone is bound to drop a fork.

Lay in an extra supply of charcoal or gas for the grill.

Create a cooking timeline so that everything will be ready when you need it. Work backwards from serving time, recognizing that some dishes, like the vegetable side dishes here, can be grilled before guests arrive, as they hold fine for an hour or two.

Marinate the meats and make the complementary sauces or dips the day before.

Complete the more labor-intensive tasks like chopping vegetables, herbs, and other flavorings a couple of hours ahead of time.



Grilled Thai Chicken Breasts with Herb-Lemongrass Crust

Serves twelve.

Before chopping the lemongrass, be sure to cut off the spiky green top and enough of the bottom to eliminate the woody core. Peel off a few of the outer layers until you're left with just the tender heart of the stalk.

1½ cups chopped fresh cilantro (leaves and tender stems)

¾ cup coconut milk

¼ cup finely chopped lemongrass (from about 2 stalks)

12 fresh basil leaves

3 Thai bird chiles, 2 jalapeños, or 2 medium serranos, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

1½ Tbs. kosher salt

2 tsp. packed light brown sugar

1½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

¾ tsp. ground coriander

12 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (5 to 5½ lb.), trimmed (remove tenderloins if still attached)
2 limes, cut into wedges for serving

Combine 1¼ cups of the cilantro with the coconut milk, lemongrass, basil, chiles, garlic, salt, brown sugar, pepper, and

coriander in a food processor or blender and purée until smooth. Arrange the chicken breasts in a nonreactive baking dish or other vessel large enough to accommodate them in a snug single layer. Pour the marinade over the breasts and turn to coat them well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 1 day.



Heat a gas grill to medium high or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire. Grill the chicken (covered on a gas grill) until it has good grill marks on the first side, 4 to 5 minutes. Flip the chicken (cover a gas grill) and continue to cook until firm to the touch and completely cooked through (check by making a slice into one of the thicker breasts), 5 to 6 more minutes. Transfer to a platter and let rest for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with the remaining ¼ cup cilantro and serve with the lime wedges.

Serving suggestion: Though these breasts are great served hot off the grill, they're also fine served cold in the coming days, either plain or sliced atop a salad.

Wine pairing: A fruity Chenin Blanc like the 2005 Pine Ridge Chenin Blanc-Viognier, California, \$13.50.

Grilled Herb-Crusted Leg of Lamb with Fresh Mint Sauce

Serves ten to twelve.

Boneless leg of lamb is the perfect cut for feeding a crowd. It's large, wonderfully flavorful, easy to prepare, and cooks to varied donesses. I like butterflying (or further flattening out) this cut and gently pounding it to make it more uniform for cooking.

FOR THE LAMB:

1 large or 2 small boneless legs of lamb (about 5½ lb.)

2 Tbs. kosher salt

2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup Dijon mustard

4 large cloves garlic, finely chopped (about 2 Tbs.)

2 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme

2 Tbs. chopped fresh rosemary

FOR THE SAUCE:

2 Tbs. granulated sugar; more as needed

1 tsp. kosher salt; more as needed

½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper; more as needed

1 cup chopped fresh mint (about 1 bunch)

¼ cup white-wine vinegar; more as needed

2 Tbs. olive oil

At least 1 day ahead, marinate the lamb:

Set the lamb flat on a large cutting board. Trim any excess fat and then make deep horizontal slices into the thicker parts and open like a book to make an even thickness all around. Lay a piece of plastic wrap on top of the lamb and using a meat mallet or the bottom of a heavy skillet, pound to flatten slightly and make the thickness more uniform. Cut the meat into 2 or 3 more-manageable pieces. Sprinkle all over with 1 Tbs. of the salt and 1 tsp. of the pepper.

In a small bowl, mix the mustard, garlic, thyme, rosemary, and the remaining 1 Tbs.

salt and 1 tsp. pepper. Spread all over the lamb, transfer to a large nonreactive dish, cover, and refrigerate for at least 24 hours and up to 2 days.

Just before grilling, make the sauce: In a medium bowl, whisk ¼ cup water with the sugar, salt, and pepper—they don't have to dissolve completely. Stir in the mint, vinegar, and oil. Let sit while the lamb grills. Taste and season with more sugar, salt, and pepper if needed. (The sauce should have a sharp, acidic tang to complement the rich lamb.)

Grill the lamb: Heat a gas grill to medium high or prepare a charcoal fire with hot and medium-hot areas. Put the lamb on the grill (on the hotter part if using a charcoal fire) and cook (covered on a gas grill) without disturbing it until it's nicely browned, 6 to 8 minutes. Flip, reduce the heat on the gas grill to medium (or move to the cooler part of the charcoal fire), and cook until an instant-read thermometer inserted into a thicker part of the lamb registers 130°F for medium rare, 5 to 8 more minutes.

Transfer the lamb to a cutting board, tent with foil, and let rest for 10 minutes. Slice thinly across the grain. and serve with the mint sauce.

Wine pairing: Look for a spicy Shiraz blend such as the 2004 Peter Lehmann "Clancy's," Barossa Valley, \$16.



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BY PAM ANDERSON

Summer with a twist

Just as we love to eat fireside during the chilly months, we can't wait to fire up the grill or spread a picnic blanket as soon as the weather turns warm.

As you start taking your meals outdoors, these recipes for summery classics with flavor twists will help you keep things interesting. Feel like burgers? Skip the meat aisle and instead head for the produce department and pick up a package of portabella mushrooms for grilling. For a change, perk up ordinary egg salad with smoked salmon, capers, and dill; add zing to fried chicken with a spicy yogurt marinade; or make your next batch of gazpacho with tomatillos rather than tomatoes. And next time salmon's on the menu, why not try a new cooking technique? Simply seal the fillets in foil with saffron, olives, tomatoes, and orange zest and pop the packets on the grill—it's foolproof.

Gas is fast

I cook on a gas grill when I'm in a hurry because it gets hot much faster than charcoal does. You can certainly use charcoal for any of the grilling recipes here; just factor in some extra time for the grill to heat up. See From Our Test Kitchen, p. 64, for pointers on cleaning and oiling your gas grill grate.



Egg Salad with Smoked Salmon, Capers & Dill

Serves four as a main course.

6 large eggs
6 oz. cold-smoked salmon, cut into small dice (1 scant cup) (for more on smoked salmon, see From Our Test Kitchen, p. 64)
6 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
½ small red onion, cut into small dice (about ⅔ cup)
⅓ cup capers, drained
2 Tbs. minced fresh dill
1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Put the eggs in a medium saucepan with enough water to cover. Cover the pan and bring the water to a boil over medium-high heat. As soon as the water boils, remove the pan from the heat and let stand, covered, until the eggs are

hard-cooked, 10 minutes. Put the eggs in ice water to cool.

Peel the eggs, chop finely, and put them in a medium bowl. Add the salmon, oil, onion, capers, dill, and lemon juice and zest. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Toss gently but well and serve.

Serving suggestion:

Serve this salad on a bed of lettuce or on toasted sandwich bread as a main course; spoon it onto toasted pita triangles for an hors d'oeuvre.



Grilled Asian Pork Tenderloin with Peanut Sauce

Serves four to five.

1 cup light coconut milk
½ cup smooth peanut butter,
preferably a natural variety
¼ cup soy sauce
3 Tbs. fresh lime juice
3 Tbs. dark brown sugar
2 large cloves garlic, minced
(2½ tsp.)
2 tsp. ground coriander
2 small pork tenderloins
(about 2 lb. total)
Vegetable oil for the grill

In a large bowl, whisk the coconut milk, peanut butter, soy sauce, lime juice, brown sugar, garlic, and coriander to make a smooth sauce.

Trim the pork of excess fat and silverskin. Butterfly the tenderloins by splitting each one lengthwise almost but not quite all the way through, so the halves remain attached.

Open each tenderloin like a book, cover with plastic wrap, and pound to an even ½-inch thickness with a meat mallet or the bottom of a small skillet. Put the pork tenderloins in the bowl with the marinade and turn to coat. Let marinate for 10 to 20 minutes (or up to several hours in the refrigerator).

While the pork marinates, heat a gas grill with all burners on high. Clean and oil the grate as described in *From Our Test Kitchen*, p. 64. Remove the tenderloins from the marinade, letting excess marinade drip back into the bowl (don't discard the marinade). Grill the tenderloins, covered, turning once, until just cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes total (cut into one to check). Transfer to a carving board and let rest for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, pour the marinade into a small saucepan and add 2 Tbs. water; bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat. If the sauce seems too thick, thin it with 1 or 2 tsp. water. Slice the pork and serve with the sauce on the side.

Serving suggestion:
 Serve with steamed jasmine or short-grain rice and stir-fried spinach or snow peas.



Tomatillo Gazpacho

Yields about 5 cups; serves four to six as a first course.

One 14-oz. can low-salt chicken broth
1 lb. tomatillos (8 to 12 medium), husked, rinsed, and cut into medium dice (3 cups)
1 medium clove garlic, minced
2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
2 medium avocados, cut into small dice (1½ cups)
½ seedless English cucumber, cut into small dice (2 cups)
½ large red bell pepper, cut into small dice (½ cup)
¼ small red onion, finely diced (¼ cup)
2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro
1 Tbs. fresh lime juice; more as needed
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat the broth in a 3-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the tomatillos and garlic, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and let simmer until the tomatillos are cooked through but still hold their

shape, about 1 minute. Let cool slightly, about 5 minutes, and then carefully purée the mixture in a blender along with the olive oil. Pour the purée into a nonreactive 9x13-inch pan and refrigerate to cool quickly.

When the purée has cooled, remove the pan from the refrigerator and stir in the avocado, cucumber, bell pepper, onion, cilantro, and lime juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to 4 hours. Before serving, taste and adjust the seasoning with more lime juice, salt, and pepper, as needed. Spoon the gazpacho into individual serving bowls or mugs.

Serving suggestion:
 Serve with tortilla chips.

Note: This recipe is quick to prepare but needs to chill for at least an hour for the flavors to develop.



Grilled Portabella Sandwiches with Tomatoes, Mozzarella & Basil

Serves four.

Vegetable oil for the grill

¼ cup mayonnaise

¼ cup freshly grated

Parmigiano-Reggiano
(½ oz.)

1 Tbs. minced garlic

(3 to 4 medium cloves)

4 good-quality sandwich
rolls, cut in half

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar

4 large portabella
mushrooms, stems
and gills removed and
discarded and caps wiped
clean (see From Our Test
Kitchen for more, p. 64)

Kosher salt and freshly
ground black pepper

4 to 8 thin slices fresh
mozzarella or sharp
provolone

½ cup lightly packed fresh
basil leaves (about ½ oz.)

2 medium ripe tomatoes,
sliced (about 9 oz.)

Heat a gas grill with all burners on high. Clean and oil the grate as described in From Our Test Kitchen, p. 64.

In a small bowl, mix the mayonnaise, Parmigiano, and 1 tsp. of the garlic; spread

the mixture over the cut sides of each roll.

In another small bowl, whisk the olive oil, vinegar, and the remaining 2 tsp. garlic. Brush the oil mixture over both sides of each mushroom cap and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Grill the mushrooms, gill side down, until grill-marked, about 3 minutes.

Flip and continue to grill until cooked through, about 3 minutes more. Reduce the heat to low, flip the mushrooms again, and top each with a portion of cheese. Put the rolls, cut sides up, on the grill along with the mushrooms. Cover the grill and cook until the rolls are crisp and warm and the cheese melts, 2 to 3 minutes.

Put the rolls and mushrooms on a platter. Arrange a few basil leaves on the bottom half of each roll. Sprinkle the tomatoes lightly with salt. Put the tomatoes and then the mushrooms on the basil leaves. Cap the sandwiches with the tops of the rolls and serve.



Orzo & Grilled Vegetable Salad with Feta, Olives & Oregano

Serves four to six as a side dish or two to three as a vegetarian main dish.

1 Tbs. kosher salt; more
as needed

8 oz. orzo (1¼ cups)

Vegetable oil for the grill

2 small Italian eggplants
(about ¾ lb. total), sliced
into ½-inch-thick rounds

1 medium red bell pepper,
quartered, stemmed, and
seeded

⅓ cup plus 2 Tbs. extra-virgin
olive oil

2 Tbs. red-wine vinegar

1 Tbs. Dijon mustard

½ small red onion, cut into
small dice (about ⅔ cup)

½ cup crumbled feta (2½ oz.)

½ cup pitted, coarsely
chopped Kalamata olives

3 Tbs. chopped fresh
oregano

In a 4-qt. saucepan, bring about 2 qt. water and the salt to a boil over high heat. Add the orzo and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 8 minutes (or according to package directions). Drain but don't rinse the pasta and pour it onto a rimmed baking sheet to cool evenly and quickly.

Heat a gas grill with all burners on high. Clean and oil the grate as described in

From Our Test Kitchen, p. 64.

Toss the eggplant and bell pepper with 2 Tbs. of the olive oil and a generous sprinkling of salt. Lay the vegetables on the grill and cook, with the grill covered, turning once, until cooked through and grill-marked, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a cutting board. Allow the vegetables to cool slightly and then cut them into small dice.

In a liquid measuring cup, whisk the vinegar with the mustard and a generous pinch of salt. Slowly whisk in the remaining ⅓ cup olive oil.

When ready to serve, combine the orzo, grilled vegetables, onion, feta, olives, and oregano in a medium bowl. Pour on the dressing, toss well, and serve.

Serving suggestion:

This salad would be delicious with grilled lamb chops or lamb burgers.



Spicy Fried Chicken

Serves four to six.

9 oz. (2 cups) all-purpose flour
½ cup plain low-fat yogurt
2 Tbs. chili powder
2½ tsp. kosher salt; more as needed
2 tsp. Bell's Poultry Seasoning
2 tsp. onion powder
2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
½ tsp. celery seed
½ to ¾ tsp. cayenne
2½ cups vegetable oil
8 chicken drumsticks, skin removed

Put the flour in a large, sturdy brown paper bag and the yogurt in a medium bowl. To the flour, add 1 Tbs. of the chili powder, 2 tsp. of the salt, 1 tsp. each of the poultry seasoning, onion powder, and pepper, and ¼ tsp. each of the celery seed and cayenne. Roll the top of the bag closed and shake to combine.

To the yogurt, add the remaining 1 Tbs. chili powder, the remaining 1 tsp. each poultry seasoning, onion powder, and pepper, ½ tsp. of the salt, the remaining ¼ tsp. celery seed, and ¼ to ½ tsp. cayenne. Mix well.

In an 11- or 12-inch straight-sided sauté pan or cast-iron skillet, heat the vegetable oil over medium heat.

Add the drumsticks to the yogurt mixture and stir and toss (with your hands or tongs) to coat completely. Put 4 of the drumsticks in the bag with the flour mixture, close the bag, and shake vigorously (over the sink in case any flour escapes) to coat well. Shake off excess flour, put the drumsticks on a plate, and repeat with the remaining chicken.

Put the drumsticks in the hot oil, cover, and fry until they're golden brown on the bottom, 5 to 7 minutes. Turn each drumstick and continue to fry, uncovered, turning occasionally as needed to brown evenly, until golden brown and cooked through, 5 to 10 minutes longer (cut into a piece to check). Put the drumsticks on a wire rack set over paper towels to drain and sprinkle all over with salt while still hot. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

Tip: If you use a large sauté pan (ideally 12 inches), you'll be able to fry all your chicken in one batch—a real time saver.



Grilled Salmon Bundles with Saffron, Tomatoes & Olives

Serves four.

2 medium plum tomatoes, cored and cut into medium dice (about 1 cup)
¼ cup pitted and coarsely chopped black oil-cured olives (20 to 25 olives)
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 Tbs. minced fresh garlic (3 to 4 medium cloves)
½ tsp. chopped fresh thyme
½ tsp. kosher salt; more as needed
Pinch saffron (15 to 20 threads)
Freshly ground black pepper
Four 6-oz. center-cut, skin-on salmon fillets

Heat a gas grill with all burners on high.

In a medium bowl, combine the tomatoes, olives, olive oil, garlic, thyme, salt, saffron, and pepper to taste.

Set one piece of salmon, skin-side down, on a 12x18-inch piece of heavy-duty foil; sprinkle lightly with salt and

pepper. Spoon a quarter of the tomato mixture over the fish and seal tightly. Repeat to make four packets.

Set the foil packets on the hot grate and cook, with the grill covered, until the fish is opaque throughout, about 8 minutes (open a packet and cut into the fish to check). Let the salmon rest for a few minutes before serving.

Tip: You can serve the salmon packets warm or at room temperature, but don't let them sit out for more than about 45 minutes.

Pam Anderson is a contributing editor to Fine Cooking and the author of Perfect Recipes for Having People Over. ♦